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A LEVEL COMPONENTS 32 & 33

LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS AND POLITICS OF THE LATE REPUBLIC

Matthew Barr, Lucy Cresswell and Alastair Thorley

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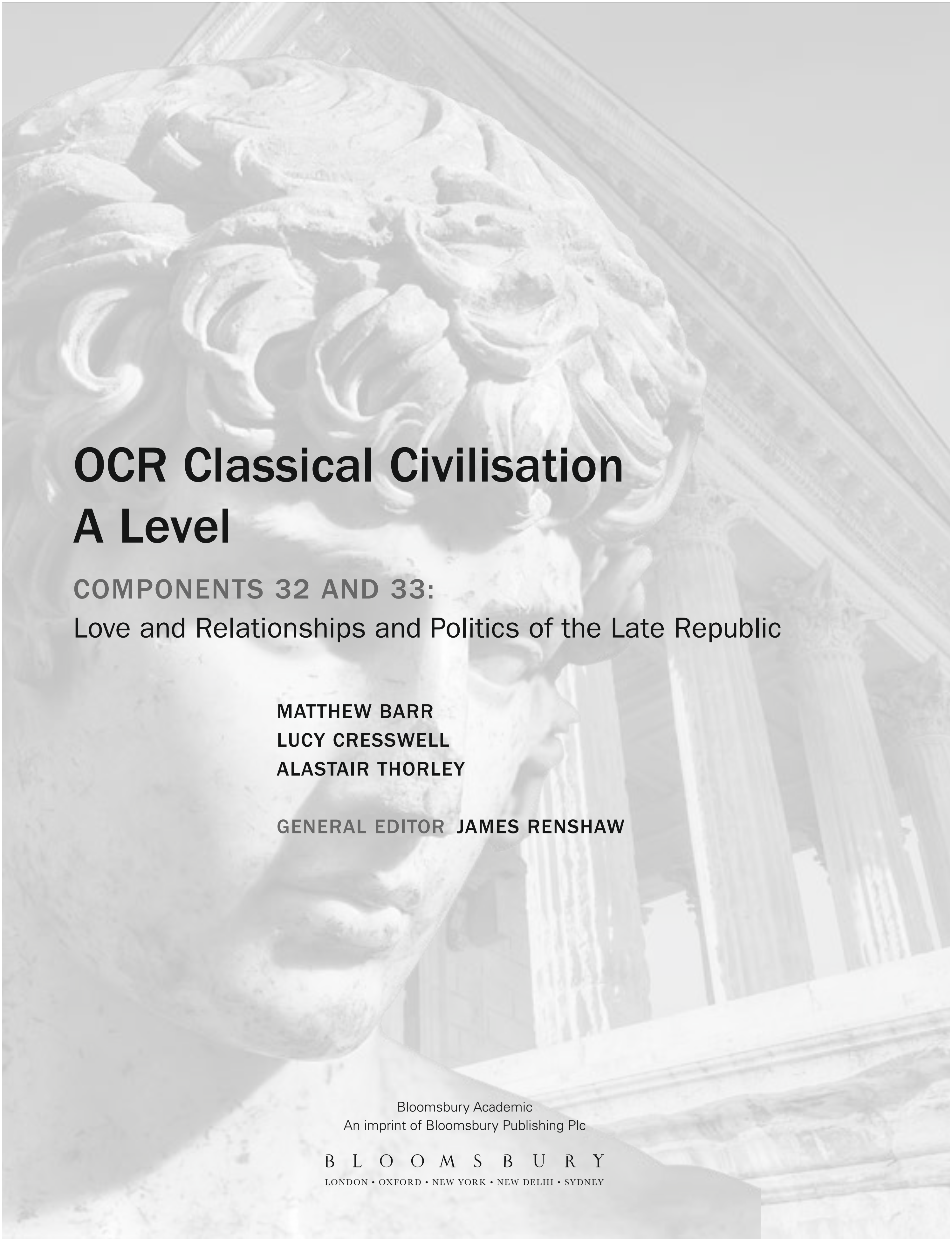

OCR Classical Civilisation A Level

COMPONENTS 32 AND 33:
Love and Relationships and Politics of the Late Republic

MATTHEW BARR
LUCY CRESSWELL
ALASTAIR THORLEY

GENERAL EDITOR **JAMES RENSHAW**

Bloomsbury Academic
An imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

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An imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

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WC1B 3DP
UK

1385 Broadway
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First published 2017

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: PB: 978-1-3500-2103-7
ePDF: 978-1-3500-2105-1
ePub: 978-1-3500-2104-4

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

Cover design by Terry Woodley and Olivia D'Cruz
Cover images: Statue of Antinous © Getty/DEA / G. DAGLI ORTI, Temple at Nimes © Getty/Alexander Gutkin goutkin@gmail.com

Typeset by Integra Software Services Pvt. Ltd.

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Acknowledgements
The authors divided the text between them as follows:

Part 1: Love and Relationships by Matthew Barr and Alastair Thorley
Part 2: Politics of the Late Republic by Lucy Cresswell

The authors would like to thank the many anonymous reviewers at universities, schools and OCR who read and commented on drafts of this text. All errors remain their own.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to your textbook for OCR A Level Classical Civilisation.

This book has been created to support two of the components from Component Group 3 Beliefs and Ideas: Component 32 ‘Love and Relationships’ and Component 33 ‘Politics of the Late Republic’.

Through your reading of this textbook and your wider study in class, you will be able to gain a broad knowledge and understanding of a range of literary and cultural materials from the classical world. As well as learning about the culture, history and ideas of the ancient Greeks and Romans, you will read ancient texts in translation and study ancient art and objects from the classical world, together with the surviving remains of religious and domestic architecture.

The specification requires you to respond to the prescribed source material and assess the content through analysis and evaluation. The box features (see p. vii) are designed to build up your skills and knowledge, while exam tips, practice questions and chapters on assessment will prepare you for taking your final examinations.

A Companion Website, available at

www.bloomsbury.com/class-civ-as-a-level

supports this textbook with further information, resources and updates. If you have any suggestions for improvement and additional resources, please get in touch by writing to contact@bloomsbury.com.

We hope you will enjoy this wide-ranging and fascinating course, and that it will inspire you to go on to further study of the ancient world.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The layout design and box features of this book are designed to aid your learning.

Colour

The colour blue is used to highlight box features that focus on assessment preparation and exam skills.

Icons

The Prescribed Source icon PS flags a quotation or image that is a source prescribed in the specification.

The Stretch and Challenge icon S&C indicates that an exercise extends beyond the core content of the specification.

The Companion Website icon CW highlights where extra material can be found on the Bloomsbury Companion Website, www.bloomsbury.com/class-civ-as-a-level.

Box features

In the margins you will find feature boxes giving short factfiles of key events, individuals and places.

Other features either **recommend** teaching material or highlight **prescribed** content and **assessment** tips and information.

Recommended teaching material is found in the following box features:

Activities
Debates
Explore Further
Further Reading
Modern Parallels
Study Questions
Topic Reviews

Prescribed content and assessment-focused tips and information are found in the following box features:

Exam Overviews
Exam Tips
Modern Scholarship
Practice Questions
Prescribed Sources

Material that extends beyond the specification is found in the Stretch and Challenge box features. Remember that the specification requires students to study extra sources and material not listed in the specification, so S&C information and exercises will provide a good place for you to start.

A note on questions

Questions found in Topic Review boxes and Study Question boxes are not worded in the form you will find on the exam papers. They are intended to encourage investigation and revision of the material but do not reflect the questions you will answer in the exam. Practice Questions at the end of each topic, and the questions found in the 'What to Expect in the Exam' chapters do mirror the format and wording you will encounter in the exam.

Glossary

At the back of the book you will find a full glossary of key words. These words are also defined in the main text with notes in the margins.

Spellings of names and texts are formatted in line with the OCR specification.

On the Companion Website you will find a colour-coded glossary that highlights from which components the word comes.

Images

Illustrations give you the opportunity to see the ancient visual material you are required to study, flagged with the PS icon, and also illustrate other relevant aspects of the ancient world. Often what survives from the ancient world does not provide us with ways to illustrate what we study. Thus, art, drawings and reconstructions from later periods and the modern day may be used to illustrate this book. Don't forget that these are not sources like your prescribed texts and visual material – they are later interpretations of aspects of antiquity and do not represent evidence for analysis.

Translations

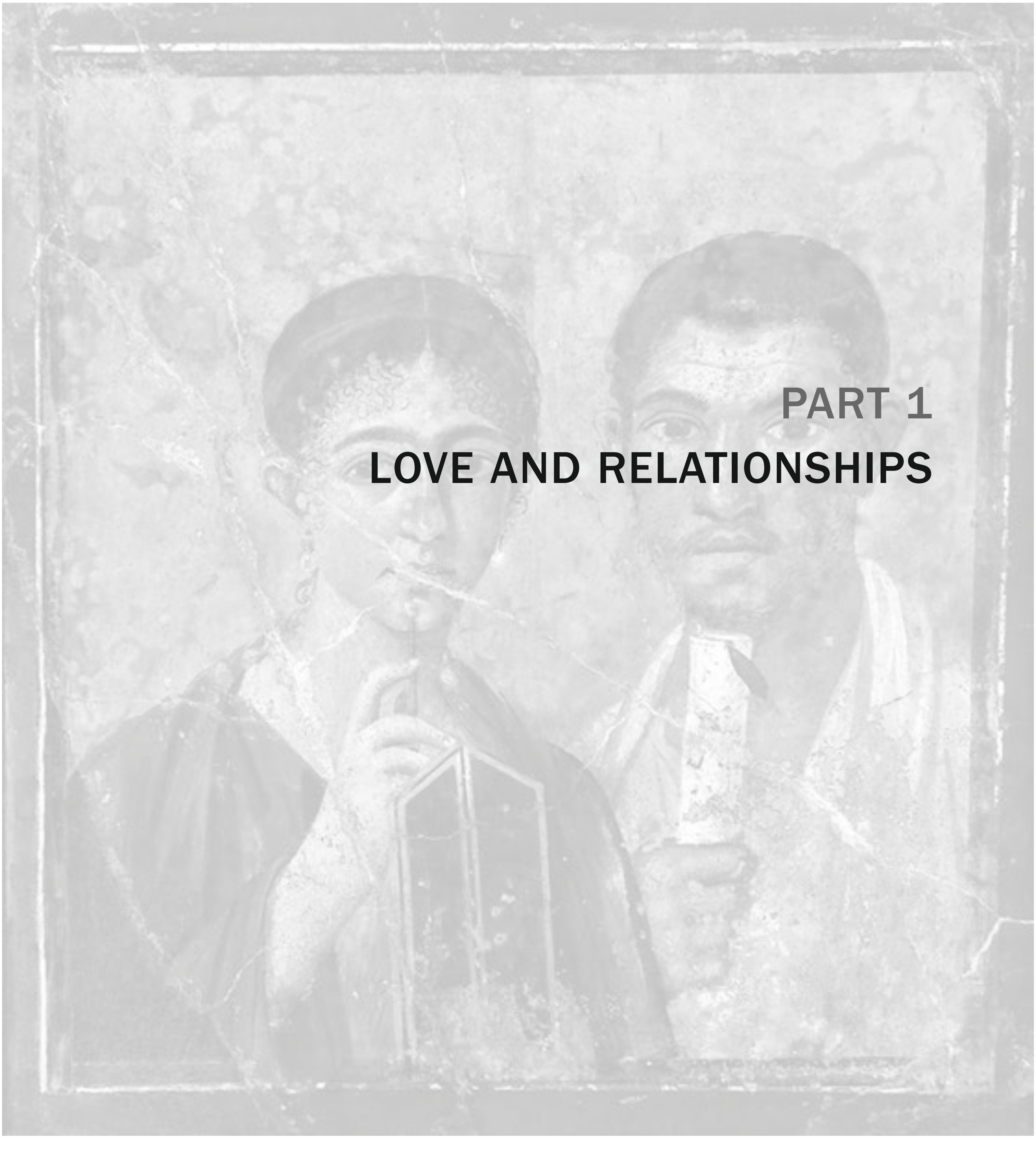
If not otherwise specified, translations are copyright OCR. Documents of translations covering the prescribed sources for each component are available from the OCR website and include OCR and other translations of the texts.

Companion Website

Resources will include
- links to the text of Prescribed Literary Sources
- further images and information on Prescribed Visual/Material Sources
- annotated further reading
- links to websites that give useful contextual material for study
- quizzes on key topics and themes
- worksheets to supplement Activity box features in the book

Don't forget

Look out for cross references to other pages in the book – this is where you will find further information and be able to link concepts or themes.



PART 1

LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS

Introduction to Love and Relationships

Ancient philosophers and poets were as intrigued by love as modern songwriters and film-makers are today. Ancient writers were keenly aware of the power of emotions and expressed different ideas about whether it was nobler to withstand arrows of desire or to yield in the face of all-conquering love.

Plato and Seneca both attempt to explain love and desire and their effect on relationships. They also considered the place of love within the ancient moral landscape. Sappho and Ovid write more about the pain and joy of love and define relationships by its presence or absence.

The written sources are examined against the background of relationships in Greek and Roman society. Although the views and descriptions of love remain achingly or amusingly relevant today, attitudes towards marriage and homoerotic relationships have changed markedly.

In her 1967 song 'Both Sides Now', Joni Mitchell sings 'I really don't know love at all'. It is easy to imagine that it would not surprise the ancient authors who feature in this topic to learn that, over two thousand years later, we are still wrestling over the ethics of love, sex, sexuality, marriage and relationships.

General Bibliography

Carson, Anne (1986), *Eros the Bittersweet*, Princeton University Press.
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Vout, C. (2013), *Sex on Show*, British Museum Press.

EXAM OVERVIEW **H408/32**

Your assessment is a written examination testing AO1 and AO2. It is

30% of the A Level	1 hr 45 mins	75 marks

35 marks will test AO1: demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- literature, visual/material culture and classical thought
- how sources and ideas reflect, and influence, their cultural contexts
- possible interpretations of sources, perspectives and ideas by different audiences and individuals

40 marks will test AO2: critically analyse, interpret and evaluate literature, visual/material culture and classical thought, using evidence to make substantiated judgements and produce coherent and reasoned arguments.

The examination will consist of two sections.

All questions in **Section A** are compulsory. There are four question types:

- short-answer questions
- 10-mark stimulus question using a passage from the prescribed sources
- 10-mark question discussing an idea from one of the key thinkers
- 20-mark essay

Section B has one question type:

- 30-mark essay

There is a choice of one from two essays. In these essays learners will be expected to make use of secondary sources and academic views to support their argument.

1.1 Men and Women

TOPIC OVERVIEW

- Greek and Roman thinking regarding:
  - the ideal qualities of men and women
  - the relative status of men and women domestically, civically and legally
- Greek and Roman thoughts about marriage, including:
  - what makes a good marriage
  - the joys and benefits of marriage
  - the relative sexual freedom allowed for men and women
  - attitudes towards adultery
- Ideas regarding the nature of 'good' and 'bad' conduct which emerge.

There are no prescribed sources for this topic, but students are encouraged to draw on any other appropriate sources and evidence they have studied in the extended-response exam questions. Here are some suggestions:

CW

- the grave stele of Hegeso
- the portrait of Terentius Neo and his wife

Men, women and their relationships are frequently represented in the literature and material culture of the Greeks and Romans. Grave inscriptions and memorials provide an insight into how men wished themselves and their wives to be remembered. The poets, philosophers and playwrights of the ancient world were interested in love, desire and the differences between men and women. The following two sources suggest ways in which material culture might offer indications about how the Greeks and Romans viewed men and women.

stele (pl. **stelai**) relief sculpture with an image and/or an inscription

The grave **stele** of Hegeso (Figure 1.1) shows a woman choosing jewellery from a box offered by a slave girl. Set up in public, the relief shows a domestic scene which emphasised the virtues of women. Hegeso is beautiful, richly dressed in thin, transparent fabric and adorning herself with jewellery, suggesting the wealth of her family.

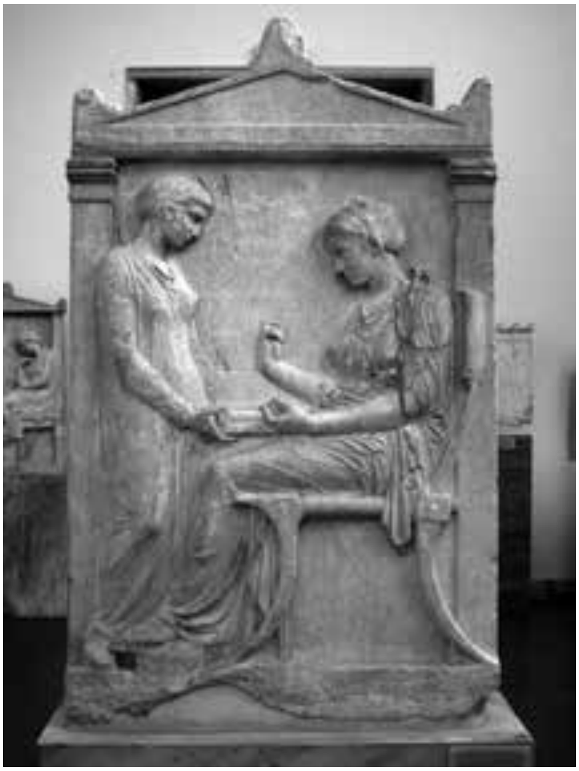


FIGURE 1.1
The funerary monument of Hegeso in the Kerameikos in Athens.

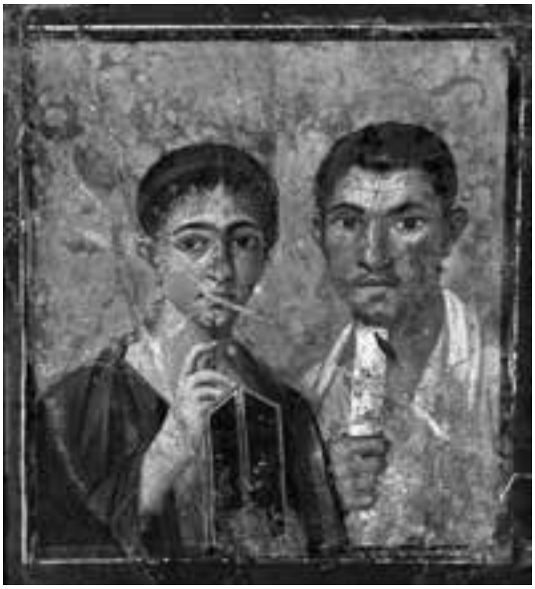


FIGURE 1.2
Portrait of the baker Terentius Neo and his wife.

The naturalistic portrait of the baker Terentius Neo and his wife from Pompeii (Figure 1.2) shows a richly dressed couple. The baker's wife is in the foreground of the painting and holds a wax tablet and a writing implement, which suggests that she is literate. Her husband holds a scroll.

THE IDEAL QUALITIES OF MEN AND WOMEN

Greece

A male Athenian citizen was expected to be involved in the life of the city. He would contribute to the wealth of his **oikos**. He would also help to secure the safety of the community by giving his opinion in the assembly and by serving as a soldier. In Homer's *Iliad* the hero Achilles is advised to be a 'speaker of words and a doer of deeds'. Moderation in word and deed was also a key principle of what it meant to be a good citizen but there were considerable freedoms available to the Athenian male.

oikos (pl. **oikoi**) the ancient Greek household; this would include not only the family and their slaves but also property and possessions

The *Odyssey*'s Penelope is often held up as the ideal woman in the ancient world. A dutiful and faithful wife, she has given birth to a worthy male heir. She keeps control of (most of) her slaves and is skilled at weaving. Andromache, the wife of Hector in the *Iliad*, is also exemplary. Brought up on Homer, Greek men would expect, ultimately, two key things from their wives: fertility (to guarantee a male heir) and fidelity (to guarantee the heir was legitimate).

Beauty was also important. Homeric epithets refer to the physical beauty of both women and goddesses: women are ‘white-armed’, men are ‘god-like’ and Aphrodite is even described as ‘having a beautiful bottom’. The woman who is supposed to have modelled for Praxiteles for the statue shown in Figure 1.3 was said to have reversed the decision of a law court by exposing her breasts.

Women’s sexuality, therefore, was both mysterious and powerful. The sense of danger was increased by men’s suspicions that women were weak-minded and enjoyed sex too much. This verdict had been given by Teiresias, the mythical prophet, who experienced in turn intercourse as a man and as a woman. It was therefore advisable to put safeguards on such a potent force by keeping it locked away. In Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata* (performed in 411 BC), the women of Athens and Sparta decide to withhold sexual relations from their husbands until the war between the two cities ends. However, the women are so desperate for sex that Lysistrata struggles to keep them motivated.

Athenian vases show women at all the important stages of a man’s life: at his birth, at his marriage, sending him off to war and mourning his death. Other than religious festivals, these were also the main occasions when a woman would emerge from the home. In the painted scene on the vase shown in Figure 1.4 a young man bids farewell to a seated woman as he leaves for battle.

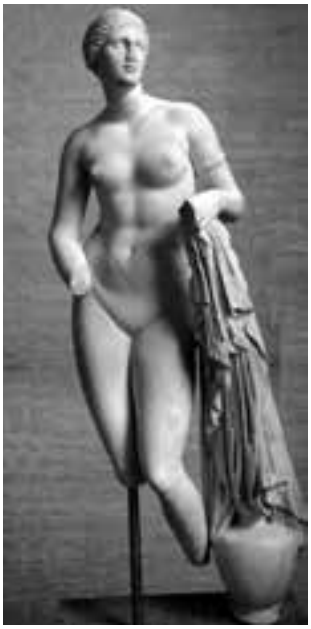


FIGURE 1.3
Marble statue of Aphrodite of Cnidus, a copy of a Greek original by Praxiteles.

FIGURE 1.4
Greek vase showing a woman watching as a man leaves for battle.

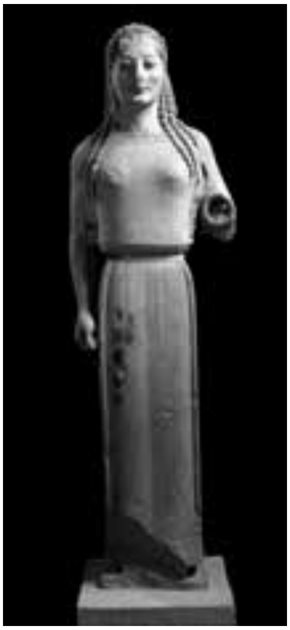


FIGURE 1.5
Statue of a young woman carved in *c.* 530 known as the ‘Peplos kore’.

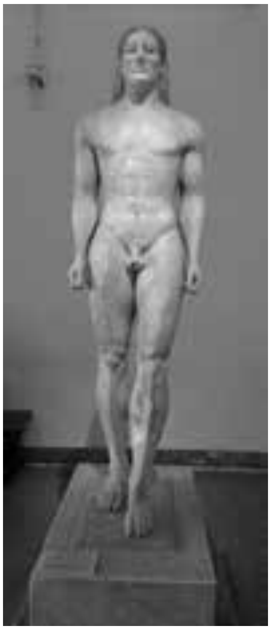


FIGURE 1.6
Statue of a young man carved in *c.* 520 known as the ‘Anavyssos kouros’.

Study question
If we had more sources written by women, what do you think they would say?

S & C Look at the two examples of Greek free-standing sculpture from the 6th century shown in Figures 1.5 and 1.6 . Both sculptures were set up as memorials and each serves to stress the virtues of men and women. Consider the differences between the two and what each suggests about men and women.

Rome

For a man in the Roman world, the concept of **virtus** was extremely important. Roman men learnt about this integral part of their duty to the state through the stories of their ancestors. The upper class of Roman men was expected to take an active part in the politics of the city and its territories. All men would start their climb up the **cursus honorum** with a stint in the military. A crucial element of this career ladder was public speaking. A Roman man would use this art to win votes during elections, plead legal cases in the law courts and command soldiers in the field. For this reason, the art of rhetoric was taught as the last stage of a Roman boy's education.

Women in the Roman world had a different concept which was of importance in their lives: **pudicitia**. They were expected to be virgins when first married and to live a life free from extra-marital sex. However, this does not mean that wives were thought of simply as tools for pregnancy. Women were expected to take a strong role in running the household and in managing business interests. An ideal woman in the Roman world was one who was frugal and capable.

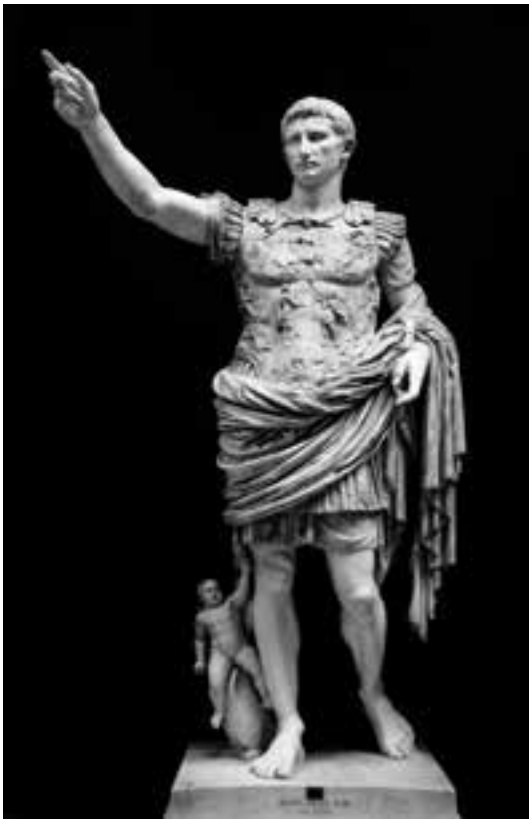
Statues of Roman women were usually clothed (as in Figure 1.8), although their **stolae** were represented as very thin. The woman's pudicitia remained intact, but the hint of sexuality afforded by such thin clothing was very attractive to Roman men. To the Romans, the stola was the perfect combination of modesty and sexual suggestiveness.

virtus 'courage' or 'virtue', a defining concept in the life of a Roman man

cursus honorum a system of political offices in the senate in Rome, elected annually

pudicitia 'chastity' or 'sexual modesty'; this is the ideal quality of a Roman woman, especially from the upper classes; stories of mythological women often praise this virtue and condemn promiscuity

stola (pl. **stolae**) the typical dress worn by a Roman woman



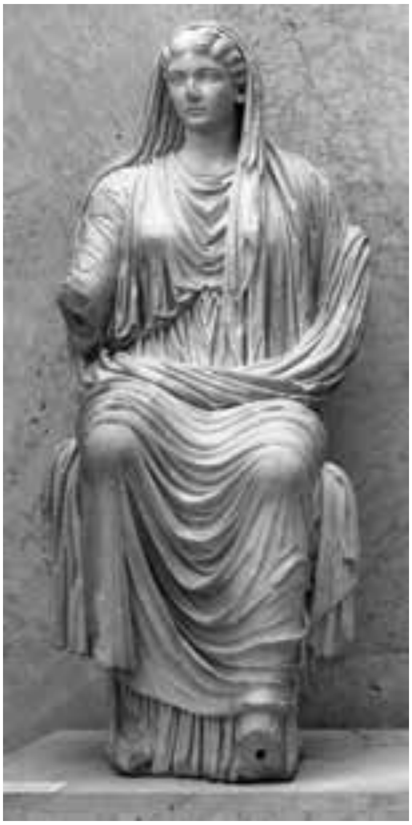


FIGURE 1.7
Statue of Augustus dressed in military uniform and draped with a toga to emphasise the important quality of virtus, 1st century AD (Vatican Museums, Rome, Italy).

FIGURE 1.8
Statue of Livia, wife of Augustus, wearing the traditional clothes of a Roman woman, 1st century AD (National Archaeological Museum, Spain).

THE RELATIVE STATUS OF MEN AND WOMEN DOMESTICALLY, CIVICALLY AND LEGALLY

Greece

kyrios (pl. **kyrioi**) the head of an ancient Greek oikos. The kyrios was responsible for the women, children and unmarried female relatives in the oikos

dowry a financial arrangement made between the families of the bride and groom

A **kyrios** had great power over his oikos. Divorce for a man was relatively easy, whereas a woman would need her father or guardian to agree to take her back and provide financial security.

He would have to surrender the **dowry** he was given but could retain all children born during the marriage. A kyrios would decide whether or not to keep any children born to his wife.

As democracy spread through Greece in the 6th and 5th centuries BC, all freeborn men were expected to take an active role in politics by expressing an opinion in the assembly, standing for election or voting on a decision. Women, along with slaves and children, did not have a vote and were prevented from standing in elections.

A free Athenian girl would be married as the result of an arrangement made between her father and her new husband. She would therefore arrive in her new home as the only outsider. Her status was conflicted: she would be relied upon to maintain the family line but, as an outsider, could not be fully trusted within the oikos. After her marriage, she was expected to take care of the day-to-day administration of the ancient oikos, under the close supervision of her husband. This would involve controlling the income of the oikos, organising the slaves who worked inside and outside the oikos, working wool and raising the children.

Infant mortality rates were high (as many as half of all children did not live past their childhood) and pregnancies were often unsuccessful. It is therefore probable that a woman would have spent much of her life after her marriage attempting to become, or to stay, pregnant.

Rome

paterfamilias (pl. **patresfamilias**) the male head of a Roman household; this was the position of the father of the Roman household and, upon his death, his son would become the paterfamilias

patria potestas the legal power of a paterfamilias over the members of his family; all legitimate children were subject to this power until the death of their father

The Roman Republic, and later the Roman Empire, relied on the importance of citizenship and duty. Both men and women, born to Roman citizens, counted as citizens themselves and enjoyed the full legal rights this entailed. There were differences between men and women, however. Women were not allowed to hold public office and could not vote in elections. They also did not serve in the military, although sometimes the wives of important Roman generals would accompany their husbands on military campaigns.

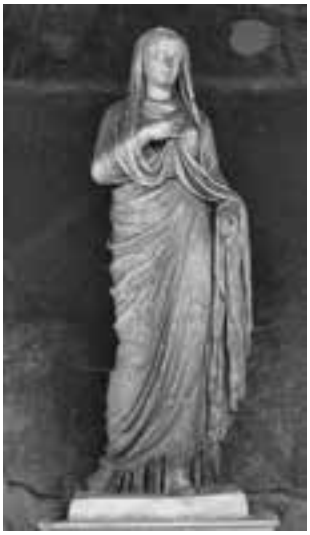
Although women could not gain public office themselves, they could have significant influence on the men in those political offices through their relationships with them. An excellent example is Livia (see Figure 1.8), the wife of Emperor Augustus (see Figure 1.7). Ancient historians often vilify her (probably unfairly), but it is clear that she was politically intelligent and would often aid Augustus in the running of the empire. A woman might gain a role in the politics of the Roman world through influential marriage.

A Roman household came under the legal power of the **paterfamilias**. The power he wielded was called the **patria potestas**. Any Roman citizen (whether man or woman) whose father still lived was subject to patria potestas. Inheritance would be shared equally between the legitimate children of the father, no matter what their age or gender. If a man died leaving no male heirs, his wife would take a similar role to that of the paterfamilias, although she would normally have male relatives to advise her. During divorce, the children of a marriage would usually remain with the paterfamilias, since the rule of patria potestas still applied. Therefore, a woman was unlikely to gain custody of her children unless she could prove that her husband was unfit to rear them.

Since women were able to inherit, it is clear that women had the legal right to own property, just like men. Indeed, since a large amount of Roman wealth was generated through ownership and management of property, women were allowed to become businesswomen and create their own profits.

A married woman would be in charge of running the household. Duties would include managing the slaves, making clothes through spinning and weaving, looking after and educating children and helping her husband with business interests. She would also be expected to be present in the house when her husband had guests in order to show modesty and virtue. Since Roman men often served in military campaigns, sometimes for years at a time, Roman women were expected to be able to run the household and family businesses even without their husband's presence.

FIGURE 1.9
Statue of Eumachia, a Pompeian businesswoman, 1st century AD (Pompeii, Italy).



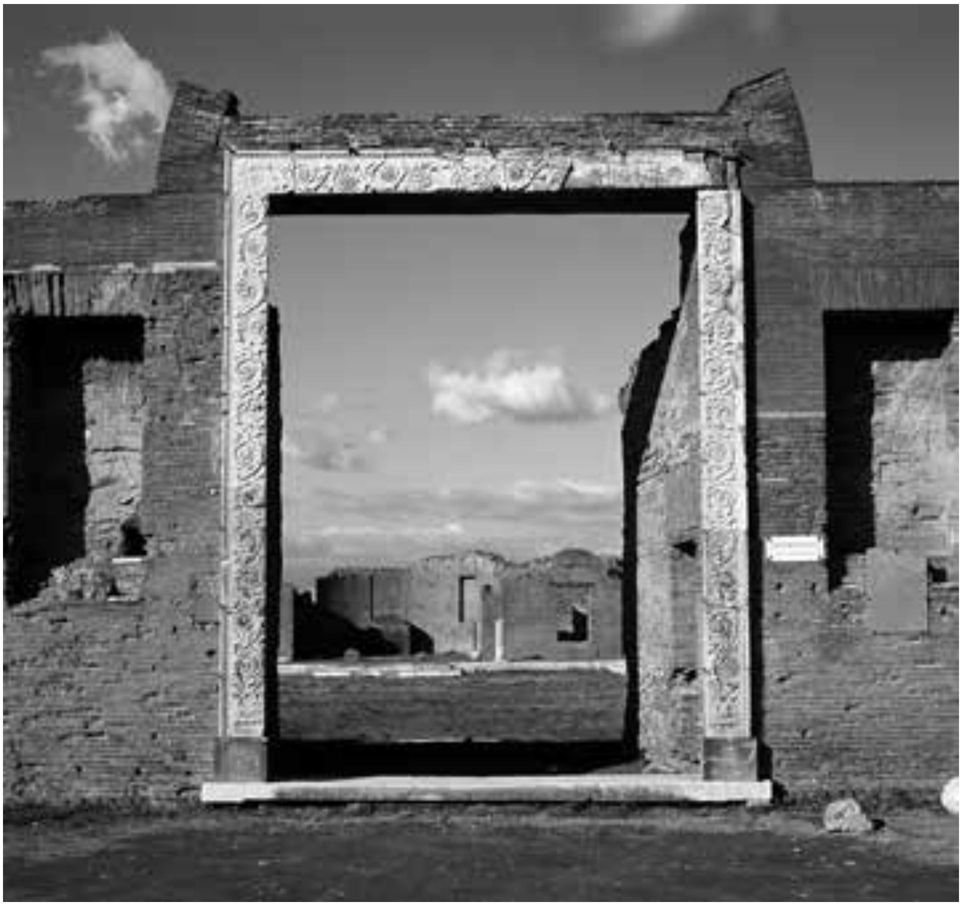


FIGURE 1.10
Eumachia's building in the forum with its intricately carved marble entrance, 1st century AD (Pompeii, Italy).

WHAT MAKES A GOOD MARRIAGE

EXAM TIP

It is important that you think of good and bad in the context of ancient societies' attitudes. Modern morality, in some respects, is very different.

Greece

Daughters were given to their husbands by their fathers with the words 'I give you my daughter to sow for the purpose of producing legitimate children'. This was therefore the most important purpose of marriage. Girls would marry as virgins so that the paternity of any future children would be guaranteed. She was then expected to produce a male heir despite the dangers to her of repeated pregnancies. Unwanted babies, often girls, might be left outside to die (this was called 'exposure') or killed. One ancient source suggests that a married couple should be having sex around three times a month for procreation but also for reasons of health. Ancient understanding of female anatomy was limited: it was felt that intercourse was necessary to stop a woman's womb from travelling around her body. If a womb wandered for long enough, there was a danger that it would reach a woman's brain and drive her mad.

Rome

There were two types of Roman marriage: **cum manu** and **sine manu**. In cum manu marriages, the bride would be transferred from her father's power to the **manus** of her husband. In sine manu marriages, the bride would remain under the patria potestas of her father and her husband would have no legal power over her. Marriages sine manu were seen as more advantageous because the woman would still inherit on her father's death and could keep and acquire her own property. This method also made divorce easier for women.

The purpose of a Roman marriage was twofold: the production of legitimate children as heirs and political alliances. The practicalities of marriage varied throughout Roman history, but one constant factor was that the man and woman required the permission of their fathers. Despite the power of the fathers, however, there was also a necessity for the bride and groom to be willing to marry. Consent was a crucial part.

For the upper classes, marriage was a seriously influential political tool. Roman marriage was little more than a private agreement between two families. A betrothal period would allow the families to get to know each other better, although it could be

manus 'power'; this is the legal power wielded by a husband over a wife (the word literally means 'hand')

cum manu 'with power'; this denotes a marriage where the husband gained manus over his wife

sine manu 'without power'; this denotes a marriage where the husband did not gain manus over his wife and she remained under patria potestas

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

Emile Stocquart wrote an article on Roman marriage, and he states that sine manu marriage 'leads to a wife being entirely independent of her husband; […] the only tie between both parties is simply cohabitation'.

Do you think that a woman who married sine manu was entirely independent of her husband? What advantages or disadvantages might this have had?

broken off at any time with no repercussions. Betrothal could happen at a very young age, but a Roman woman would probably marry in her mid to late teens, certainly no earlier than twelve (the legal lower limit); a Roman man would probably marry in his late teens or early twenties, though he was allowed to marry at fourteen. In both cases, Romans were not allowed to marry before puberty.

THE JOYS AND BENEFITS OF MARRIAGE

Greece

Marriage was the key to ensuring that the regular intercourse deemed necessary for a woman's health took place within a controlled environment. This would guarantee that the paternity of any child would be known to the civic authorities. Pericles' citizenship law in 451 stated that a baby born in Athens would only be considered a citizen of the city if both his father and his mother were Athenian citizens.

Some ancient writers talk of marriages being a partnership, and the conversations between Penelope and Odysseus and Hector and Andromache in the Homeric epics suggest a close relationship could be expected. Other than observing his parents, much of a Greek child's formative understanding of what to expect from marriage would come from the Homeric epics. There is also evidence that a woman's contribution to the oikos was valued by her husband.

KEY INDIVIDUAL

Pericles

Date: *c.* 495–429 BC

Athenian general and politician

Pericles was a key figure in the rise to prominence of Athens in the 5th century. Thucydides, the historian, refers to him as the 'first citizen' of the Athenian democracy.

Study question

Explain the terms 'kyrios' and 'oikos'.

Rome

Marriages were relatively easy to institute, but so was divorce. Marriage was little more than the intent of the couple to live together as husband and wife, so divorce was the lack of intent of one of the parties. Due to changes in political allegiance, it was not uncommon for men and women to marry multiple times over the course of their lives. Tiberius, the second emperor of Rome, is a good example of the political match-making which was common:

> [Tiberius] was forced to divorce [Agrippina] […] and immediately marry Augustus' daughter, Julia.
>
> Suetonius, *The Life of Tiberius* 7

It would be unfair to assume that because most marriages were arranged, genuine affection did not exist between husbands and wives in ancient Rome. Pliny the Younger wrote a letter in which he praised his new wife and claimed a mutual affection:

> She loves me […] [and] she has gained a literary interest from her devotion to me. […] For these reasons, I live in the most certain hope that our union will be everlasting and will increase day by day.
>
> Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 4.19

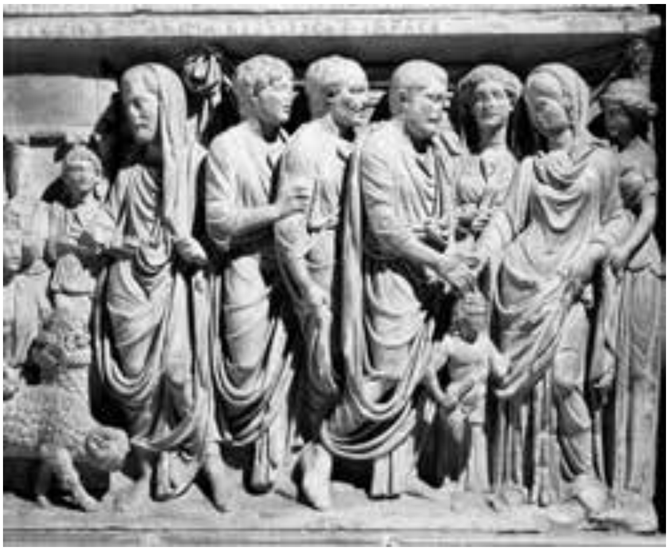


FIGURE 1.11
Relief of a Roman wedding ceremony, 3rd century AD (Basilica Papale di San Lorenzo fuori le Mura, Italy).

Particular benefits of marriage were instituted when Augustus passed two **Julian laws** on marriage in 18 BC, which set down some specific rules aimed at encouraging marriage and the birth of children. One of the Julian marriage laws put in place specific legal benefits for married couples and families who had three or more children. For example, unmarried men and women were unable to accept legacies from wills.

Augustus encouraged remarriages (Livia herself was his third wife, Augustus her second husband), although it was expected that a Roman woman would wait a period of time before remarrying to avoid potential issues of paternity of children.

Therefore, as well as the social, familial and political benefits of marriage, there were also legal benefits.

Julian law a law introduced by a member of the Julian family, which included the first five emperors

erastes (pl. **erastai**) the adult in a pederastic relationship (in English 'lover')

eromenos (pl. **eromenoi**) the boy in a pederastic relationship (in English 'beloved')

gymnasium (pl. **gymnasia**) an area where men would meet to exercise naked. The word 'gymnasium' is derived from *gymnos*, Greek for 'naked'

symposium (pl. **symposia**) a party with only male guests. There would be a feast and then drinking and often discussions

THE RELATIVE SEXUAL FREEDOM OF MEN AND WOMEN

Greece

In Athens, a married woman would expect to have one sexual relationship in her life, with her husband. A man, however, could have a variety of partners. During his lifetime, he might act both as **erastes** and **eromenos** and he might have relationships with prostitutes. As a boy in his late teens his sexual experience might begin with an older man in the **gymnasium**. This older man might play a significant role in the boy's upbringing. After a free Athenian citizen was married, he would regularly attend **symposia** where slaves would provide sexual favours.

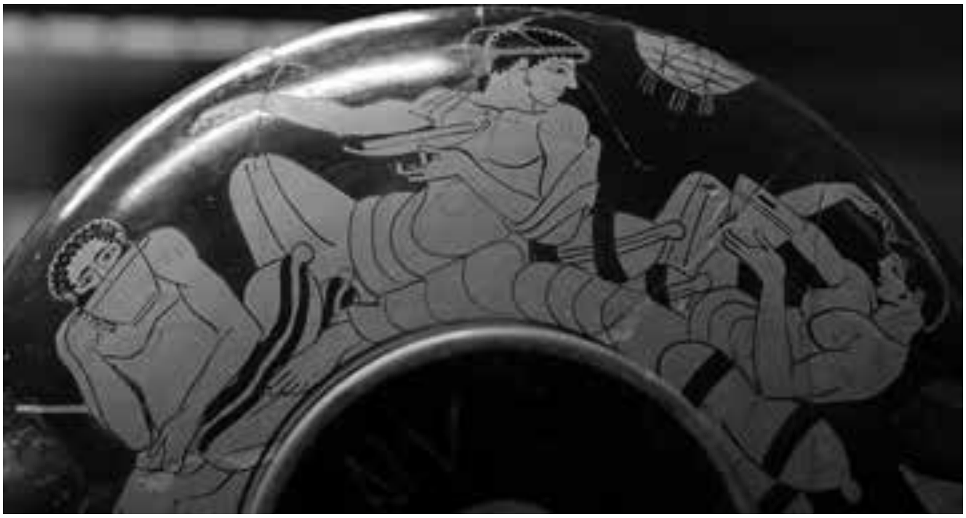


FIGURE 1.12
A Greek drinking cup depicting a symposium.

The men's (the **andron**) and women's areas of houses were separated to some extent but, even so, symposia were noisy affairs. Kottabos was played, where revellers would attempt to flick the dregs of the wine from their emptied wine cup across the andron. Vases show that male and female slaves would have been present and some show sexual scenes taking place within the context of the symposium. There is a story that Alcibiades' wife did attempt to divorce her husband due to his relationships with prostitutes. However, she was unsuccessful: Alcibiades picked her up in the court and carried her home.

Pericles divorced his wife and married a prostitute from the city of Miletus.

andron a room on the ground floor of a Greek house, which was only used by the kyrios and his guests at a symposium. There would be couches around the walls

Rome

In Roman times, sex was only allowed between a husband and wife. Women were expected to sleep with no one but their spouse. The same rule technically applied to men, but there were some exceptions in their case: since the **infames** did not have a legal standing, a man was allowed to engage in sexual relations with an infamis. In fact, Horace says that the Roman statesman Cato once commented on the virtue of a man who had come out of a brothel, saying,

infamis (pl. **infames**) a person who, because of their profession or conduct, held no legal standing in Roman society; this class included prostitutes, actors and gladiators

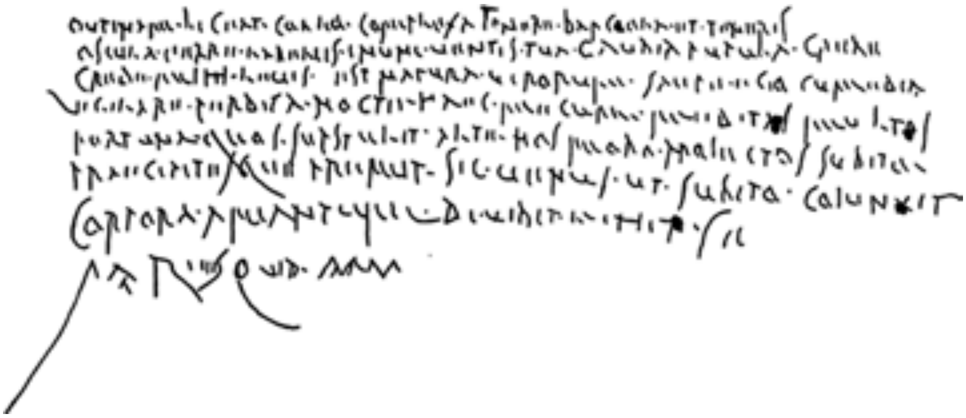


FIGURE 1.13
A line drawing of a graffito from Pompeii written by a woman to another woman (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* IV 5296).

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

Kristina Milnor claims that the graffito in Figure 1.13 is written by a woman and addressed to a woman and Amy Richlin uses it as one of her pieces of evidence for female homosexuality in the Roman world.

Why do you think there is so little written evidence for female homoerotic relationships which survives?

The following provide useful further reading on this:

Milnor, K. (2014), *Graffiti and the Literary Landscape in Roman Pompeii* (Chapter 4), Oxford University Press.

Richlin, A. (2010), Sexuality in the Roman Empire, in Potter, D. S. (ed.) *Companion to the Roman Empire* (pp. 327–353), Wiley-Blackwell.

> It is right that young men descend on this place rather than
> Meddle with the wives of others!
>
> Horace, *Satires* 1.2.34–35

Women were not allowed this same exception due to problems this might cause with paternity of children.

Same-sex relationships in Roman times were not acceptable between freeborn male citizens, though there was no stigma attached to a Roman man having homoerotic relations with a male infamis or slave. It was not the gender of a man's sexual partner that mattered, but rather their status. To the Romans, sex consisted of a 'dominant' (penetrative) party and a 'passive' (penetrated) party. As long as a citizen took the dominant role, his virtus could not be called into question. Emperor Hadrian and his lover, Antinous, are a famous example of a homoerotic relationship. Female same-sex relationships are less well documented. However, evidence from curse tablets, graffiti and artwork suggests that relationships of this kind did occur (Figure 1.13). Since homoerotic sex between women did not involve penetration in the same way or produce children, it is quite likely that Roman men were unconcerned with it. It was not a threat to a woman's pudicitia.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS ADULTERY

Study question
How are modern attitudes towards adultery and sexual freedom different from Greek attitudes?

Greece

It was a legal obligation for a man to divorce his wife if she committed adultery. If he did not, he could himself be prosecuted and deprived of his citizen rights. Adultery threatened the security of paternity within the oikos and so it was a crime also against the state. A husband also had a legal right to kill a man if he found him in bed with his wife.

EXPLORE FURTHER

Read Lysias' speech 'On the murder of Eratosthenes' and consider what it tells us about attitudes towards adultery.

Rome

Roman poetry used adultery as one of its recurrent themes (see Ovid, p. 66); however, the law stated that adultery was illegal. One of Augustus' Julian laws on marriage set out the punishments involved for any parties found to be having extra-marital sex. Apart from the exception for men (p. 13), sex with anyone other than a spouse was considered adultery.

The punishment for adultery was strict: both parties in the affair would be exiled to separate islands and property would be confiscated. A man whose wife had committed adultery was expected to divorce her or else face prosecution. Augustus was so keen for his moral legislation to be followed that he even ended up exiling his own daughter and granddaughter (both named Julia) because they broke the law by committing adultery:

> Both of them [Augustus] banished from Rome and he punished their lovers with death or exile. Indeed, in giving what was a common fault […] the serious title of 'religious blasphemy' and 'treason', he went beyond the forbearance of our ancestors and even beyond his own laws.
>
> Tacitus, *Annales* 3.24

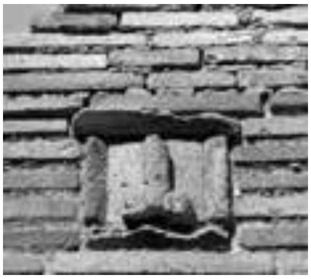
Augustus had to lead by example. Adultery was not to be tolerated in Rome.

IDEAS REGARDING THE NATURE OF 'GOOD' AND 'BAD' CONDUCT WHICH EMERGE

Greece

Good conduct was what best served the city. Men should keep their wives in check, have successful oikoi and contribute to the city. Women should keep themselves in check, run successful oikoi and contribute the next generation to the city. However, the ancient sources are full of tales of when this did not happen and the Greeks were endlessly debating what constituted 'good' and 'bad' conduct.

FIGURE 1.14
Phallus carved into the wall of a building, 1st century AD (Pompeii, Italy).



MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

'But there was an inconsistency about men's depiction of women. On the one hand, they were seen as the all-embracing, archetypal source and providers of life; on the other, as she-monsters of outrageous and devilish cunning.' Taken from 'The World of Athens', ed. Robin Osborne p. 143 (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Why do you think that there was such an inconsistency in the portrayal of women by men? How does this conflicted attitude affect love and relationships in the ancient world?

Rome

Women and men were expected to live modestly in Roman times. Sexual promiscuity was banned by law and the punishments were quite severe. If a Roman man could not control his own lusts, how was he expected to exert his power as paterfamilias over others? A traditional Roman family consisted of a paterfamilias, a wife and children. Incest (including relations by marriage), polygamy, interclass marriage and adultery with other free citizens were illegal. Marriage was an institution which produced the next generation of citizens and therefore it needed protection.

Despite this, Romans were still fond of sexual imagery, especially involving scenes from mythology. While male statues in Rome tended to be clothed in order to show their citizenship (by wearing a toga) and superiority (those conquered were usually depicted stripped of their clothes), phallic images were common throughout the Roman world. This was rather different from Greek culture, which celebrated the nude male figure, but tended to avoid erect phalli. For Romans, these images, as well as representing virility, were also considered effective in warding off evil spirits.

TOPIC REVIEW

1. What was the importance of the kyrios in a Greek family?
2. How were men and women expected to contribute to the ancient Greek city?
3. What were the main contributions which men and women were expected to make to the Roman state?
4. How and why were men and women treated differently in the ancient city?
5. How did the expectations of men and women differ in the ancient city?

EXAM TIP

You will find it helpful to look frequently at the table at the end of the component (pp. 85–86), which compares Greek and Roman attitudes to the key themes in this topic.

Don't forget that in the examination you will have to compare Greek and Roman attitudes towards love and relationships.

Further Reading

Bierkan, A., Sherman, C. and Stocquart, E. (1907), Marriage in Roman Law, *The Yale Law Journal* 16.5: pp. 303–327.

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Richlin, A. (1993), Not before Homosexuality: The Materiality of the Cinaedus and the Roman Law against Love between Men, *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 3.4: pp. 523–573.

Richlin, A. (2010), Sexuality in the Roman Empire, in Potter, D. S. (ed.) *Companion to the Roman Empire* (pp. 327–353), Wiley-Blackwell.

1.2 Plato on Love and Desire

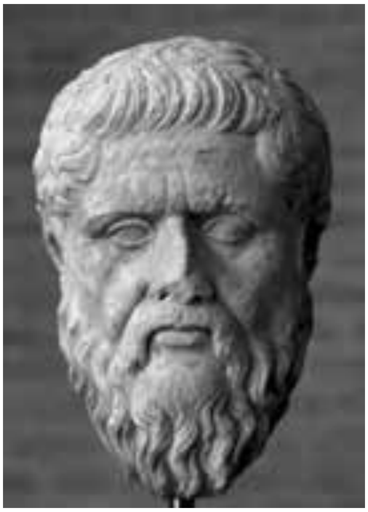
TOPIC OVERVIEW

- Plato's ideas about love and desire, including:
  - the definitions of love
  - the physical symptoms of desire
  - the differences between love and desire
  - how and why desire should be controlled
  - how and why desire can be resisted
  - homoerotic relationships
- Ideas regarding the nature of 'good' and 'bad' conduct which emerge
- How Plato's contemporary context influenced his ideas
- How these ideas might have been received by his contemporary audience

There are no prescribed sources for this topic, but students are encouraged to read selections from Plato's works and draw on any other appropriate sources and evidence they have studied in the extended-response exam questions. Here are some suggestions:

CW

- Plato's *Symposium* and commentaries on the dialogue
- Plato's *Laws*
- Plato's *Republic*



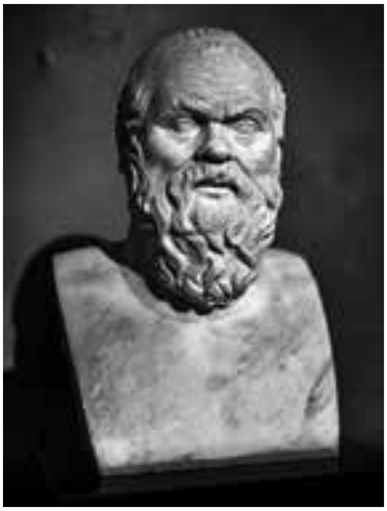


FIGURE 1.15
Marble head of Plato.

FIGURE 1.16
Marble head of Socrates.

This topic considers the ideas about love and desire found in the works of Plato. He writes mostly in the form of dialogues: verbal exchanges between two or more characters. The chief character in most of these dialogues is Socrates. After encouraging others to put forward their theories, Socrates dismantles their ideas with a series of probing questions. It is tempting, therefore, to say that Plato expresses his own ideas through Socrates but this is not certain. Plato's influence on Athenian and all subsequent Western philosophy is considerable.

KEY INDIVIDUALS

Plato
Date: *c.* 427–347 BC

Greek philosopher and author

Plato was born into a rich Athenian family. He was inspired by Socrates. After Socrates was executed in 399, Plato travelled around the Mediterranean. He later returned to Athens and founded the Academy, a school for philosophers of which the most famous student was Aristotle. He remained in Athens until his death.

Socrates
Date: 469–399 BC

Greek philosopher

Socrates was not born into a wealthy family. He served in the Athenian army in the Peloponnesian War. Socrates was famously ugly and he is shown with bulging eyes, a large forehead and a pot-belly. However, he quickly gained a following of young aristocrats, who were keen to learn from him. He did not write any of his ideas down and so his later reputation is mainly down to the representation of his ideas in Plato.

TIMELINE

431–404 BC	Peloponnesian War between Athens and her allies and Sparta and her allies
c. 427 BC	Plato is born in Athens
c. 407 BC	Plato meets Socrates
399 BC	Socrates is executed in Athens
398–380 BC	Plato leaves Athens and travels around the Mediterranean
380 BC	Foundation of the Academy
347 BC	Death of Plato

PLATO'S IDEAS ABOUT LOVE AND DESIRE

The definitions of love

Plato writes about love in a number of his dialogues: the speeches in *Symposium* are concerned with the nature of love, in *Phaedrus* he deals with love, persuasion and philosophical enlightenment and in *Republic* and *Laws* he considers the place of love and relationships in a perfect society.

Symposium is set at a drinking party in Athens in 416 BC. The tragic poet Agathon has just seen his play win first place in the annual competition and he is in the mood to celebrate with his friends. After they have all eaten the feast and drunk their wine, a conversation to celebrate the god Love is proposed.

Five of those present each offer slightly different views on the god. It is then left to Socrates and then to Alcibiades, who arrives at the proceedings late and drunk, to give their views on both love and the preceding speeches.

The first speaker is Phaedrus, he is attending the symposium with his lover, Pausanias. To Phaedrus, love is the path to virtue. He considers Love to be the oldest of the gods. Phaedrus is speaking of love in homoerotic relationships – between an erastes and an eromenos. Each is driven to do well for the state in front of the other due to the love between them. Phaedrus is himself the eromenos to Pausanias who follows him.

Pausanias defines Love by splitting it into two – **Pandemian Eros** and **Uranian Eros**. The first is sexual love, desire, passion – this is the form of Love common to all. Pausanias explains that Pandemian Eros is desire for women as well as for boys and goes on to describe women as 'the most unintelligent people imaginable' (*Symposium* 181b, translated by Waterfield (Penguin 2008)). He aspires, however, to the latter, Uranian Eros – a nobler expression of love which blossoms into friendship and shared virtue and knowledge. It is the desire for mental enrichment. Pausanias draws a distinction between Uranian Eros and **pederasty**.

Eryximachus, a doctor, is the next to speak, standing in for Aristophanes who has disrupted proceedings with a bout of hiccups. His ideas about Love are, as we might expect, more scientific and he explains Love as a human manifestation of a universal phenomenon. Love, he says, can be seen in the heavens and throughout nature.

> Anyway, as I say, the science of medicine is completely governed by Love and so are sport and agriculture. And it takes only a moment's thought to make it perfectly clear that the same goes for music too.
>
> Plato, *Symposium* 187a

Eryximachus goes on to explain how Love produces harmony in many different aspects of life.

Aristophanes is now able to proceed. His is the central speech about Love and his ideas are the most memorable and accessible of all the definitions in the *Symposium*. He tells the story of the origins of Love. Originally, all humans were spheres with two sets of faces, arms, legs and sexual organs on the outside (which were used only for sowing their seeds on the ground). There were three sexes: male, female and androgynous. When these beings grew in confidence and tried to reach Olympus, they were split in half by Zeus as a punishment and cast back down in a jumble. Deprived of their other halves, the humans now roamed the land searching for their missing partner. Each half of a male or female sphere sought a partner of the same sex, while the androgynous spheres sought a partner of the opposite sex.

Aristophanes' definition explains both homosexuality and heterosexuality and also the deep feelings of contentment which love creates. It also suggests that what we long for is wholeness and that there is a perfect partner for everybody. Aristophanes makes the following inspiring exhortation on Love.

> We human beings will never attain happiness unless we find perfect love, unless we each come across the love of our lives and thereby recover our original nature.
>
> Plato, *Symposium* 193c

Aristophanes brings his speech to a close by suggesting the following compromise.

> In the context of this ideal, it necessarily follows that in our present circumstances the best thing is to get as close to the ideal as possible, and one can do this by finding the person who is his heart's delight.
>
> Plato, *Symposium* 193c

Pandemian Eros common desire for the body, rather than for the mind: *pan* means 'all' and *demos* means 'people'.

Uranian Eros heavenly desire (from *ouranos*, the Greek for 'heaven'). Uranian Eros is specifically a male desire for other males.

pederasty sexual relationships between an adult male (**erastes**) and a pubescent boy (**eromenos**)

KEY INDIVIDUAL

Aristophanes
Date: *c.* 446–*c.* 386 BC

Athenian comic dramatist

Aristophanes wrote comedies which poked fun at various aspects of Athenian life. He exposes politicians to ridicule and also makes fun of Socrates in one of his plays (*The Clouds*, performed in 423 BC).

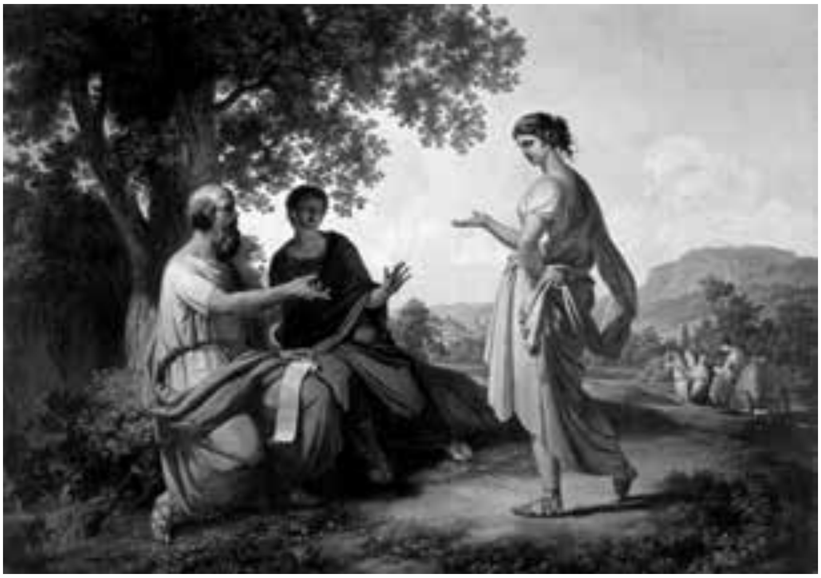


FIGURE 1.17
Socrates meets Diotima.

ACTIVITY

If you could gather six professionals together to discuss love, what specialities would they have and what would they say?

Agathon, fresh from his victory, now brings the opening speeches to a triumphant close. He praises the virtues of Love in poetic style. Love is young, soft and sweetly scented, he is also just, moderate, courageous and wise. So Love is desired because Love is beautiful.

Socrates now gives his answer; he claims that he has been taught about Love by Diotima, a priestess he has met. He refers to Diotima as an 'expert' on love and then describes his exchange with her. Diotima plays the role of the questioner and encourages Socrates to see Love as neither ugly nor attractive and as neither divine nor mortal but instead occupying a middle ground. She explains to Socrates that Love is the child of Poverty and Resource, who united in a drunken clinch. Love therefore has elements of both: he is poor, shoeless and homeless but is a resourceful hunter who lays traps for the beautiful. Understanding this, seekers of true Love must move past physical desire and instead strive for what is beautiful. Love is necessary for immortality, either through procreation or through the acquisition of true goodness. Love is itself a lover searching for the beauty it lacks. Diotima identifies beauty not simply as physical but as the beauty of goodness and truth. Love is therefore the pursuit of truth or, to put it another way, philosophy.

> What else could make life worth living, my dear Socrates, than seeing true beauty? If you ever do catch sight of it, gold and clothing and good-looking boys and youths will pale into insignificance beside it.
>
> Plato, *Symposium* 211d

To Alcibiades, the next speaker, the embodiment of love is simply Socrates himself. In Socrates there is knowledge and virtue: Alcibiades' description of Socrates' bravery on the battlefield would resonate with all Athenians. But Socrates refuses to have sex with him.

Figure 1.18 shows an erastes (right) and an eromenos (left) at a symposium.

KEY INDIVIDUAL

Alcibiades
Date: *c.* 450–*c.* 404 BC

Athenian general and politician

Alcibiades was famously handsome and notorious in Athens for his extravagant and hedonistic lifestyle. Although he achieved some notable successes for the Athenians in the Peloponnesian War, he also liaised with the Spartans and the Persians, both of whom were enemies of the Athenians.

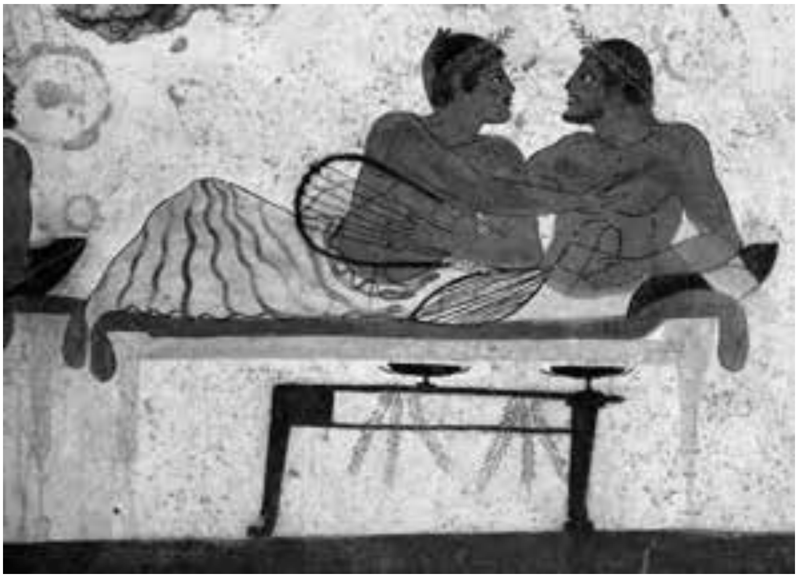


FIGURE 1.18
Detail from the so-called 'Tomb of the Diver' from Paestum, showing a symposium scene painted in *c.* 480 BC.

The physical symptoms of desire

In the *Phaedrus*, Plato, through the character Socrates, offers the idea that sexual desire urges the soul to grow wings and take flight. His description is full of language which hints at the whole experience of sexual arousal: parts of the body become warm, moist and swell. The body then begins to shudder as if reaching orgasm.

> And as he looks upon him, a reaction from his shuddering comes over him, with sweat and unwonted heat; for as the effluence of beauty enters him through the eyes, he is warmed; the effluence moistens the germ of the feathers, and as he grows warm, the parts from which the feathers grow, which were before hard and choked, and prevented the feathers from sprouting, become soft, and as the nourishment streams upon him, the quills of the feathers swell and begin to grow from the roots over all the form of the soul; for it was once all feathered. Now in this process the whole soul throbs and palpitates….
>
> Plato, *Phaedrus* 251a–b

In the *Charmides*, Socrates describes himself as getting 'hot and bothered' when he steals a glance underneath the cloak of Charmides, a young beautiful boy; Plato describes him, poetically, as being 'on fire'. However in the *Symposium*, Socrates is clearly able to restrain any feelings of desire as he rejects the advances of the beautiful Alcibiades. Alcibiades compares his desire for Socrates to being bitten by a snake.

Study question
What are the ideas about love suggested in Plato's *Symposium* and how do they differ from each other?

ACTIVITY

Read W. H. Auden's 'O Tell Me the Truth about Love' and compare the definitions in the poem with the ideas found in Plato's *Symposium.*

The differences between love and desire

In the *Symposium*, Phaedrus' speech focuses on the benefits of love in producing a sense of shame and therefore encouraging virtue in lovers (particularly in a military context). He does not mention sexual desire at all. As the eromenos in his relationship, Phaedrus' desire would not be sexual but rather aimed at self-improvement. Pausanias' speech seemed to suggest the brutality and ugliness of sexual desire but he says that the motivations for the act should define whether or not it can be judged beautiful or ugly. He is an erastes who would enter into the relationship partly for sexual satisfaction from his more beautiful, younger partner. He argues that a relationship should last and develop into mutual love and respect following the initial satisfaction of desire.

Pausanias shares his ideas about sexual desire: as an erastes he is defined by it. He holds that sexual desire is the beginning of a loving relationship. He feels that it is morally right for an erastes to expect gratification of his sexual desire in return for the virtue he will develop in his eromenos.

> …there's only one form of voluntary slavery which isn't reprehensible. This is slavery whose aim is goodness. I mean, our society does sanction being prepared to perform services for another person as long as one's intention is that the person being served will enable one to improve in some sense, such as by increasing one's knowledge….
>
> Plato*, Symposium* 184c

Aristophanes' speech is more about people finding fulfilling, loving relationships than it is about sexual desire; it reflects human longing for completion. He holds that love is a far more likely explanation for people forming lifelong partnerships than sexual desire. Sex is important for procreation, of course, but it is also helpful to relax people and enable them to focus on other things.

In the *Laws*, there is a discussion over the difficulties in perceiving the differences between friendship, desire and love.

> It is necessary to discern the real nature of friendship and desire and love (so-called), if we are to determine them rightly; for what causes the utmost confusion and obscurity is the fact that this single term embraces these two things, and also a third kind compounded of them both.
>
> Plato, *Laws* 837a

In this dialogue, the Athenian goes on to explain that friendship is affection for someone with whom we have something in common. Desire is specifically sexual and physical. Love is first defined as an 'intense' feeling of friendship. It is then divided into two – there is the love which can allow desire to be part of it and there is the love which cannot.

> For he that is in love with the body and hungering after its bloom, as it were that of a ripening peach, urges himself on to take his fill of it, paying no respect to the disposition of the beloved; whereas he that counts bodily desire as but secondary, and puts longing looks in place of love,[2] with soul lusting really for soul, regards the bodily satisfaction of the body as an outrage, and, reverently worshipping temperance, courage, nobility and wisdom, will desire to live always chastely in company with the chaste object of his love.
>
> Plato, *Laws* 837c–d

How and why desire should be controlled

In the *Republic*, Plato points out the effect which the behaviour of individuals can have on the state. It is in everybody's interests for society to be moderate and well controlled. Comparing desire for sex with desire for food, he stresses the importance of controlling both if the state is to be successful. Immoderate love is also compared to the behaviour of an extreme tyrant. Plato explains in the *Republic* that everyone experiences desire in their dreams but that our rational selves can control these desires when we wake. In the *Phaedo*, the account of Socrates' last dialogue with his friends before he dies, the true philosopher (the assumed aim for all men) is described as rising above his desires and using reason alone to inform his actions. Desires are compared to nails hammered into the soul.

Eryximachus, the doctor in the *Symposium*, talks about restraining unhealthy desire for unhealthy Love, as for unhealthy food. The comparison between desire and disease occurs frequently in his speech: disease was a disaster for a city in the ancient world and so, by association, was immoderate desire.

In the *Symposium*, Socrates also refers to examples of incorrect desire, particularly incest, when refuting Agathon's comments about the glories of Love. Plato also makes comments about the dangers of incest in the *Republic*.

Study question
How does Plato represent desire as a threat to the state?

How and why desire can be resisted

At the end of the *Symposium*, Alcibiades describes how Socrates resisted his increasingly obvious advances. Alcibiades' speech follows Socrates' explanation of how he has been taught by Diotima about the importance of resisting physical desire. Alcibiades explains Socrates' restraint with reference to his endurance when on military campaign: Socrates had been able to go without rations and had also walked barefoot over ice. Ironically, Socrates' virtuous denial of physical desire makes him more desirable to Alcibiades. Alcibiades is a beautiful, young man and would more usually have been the eromenos in this relationship. However, he ends up as the erastes to Socrates, who was the older of the two of them and also, famously, ugly. Socrates reciprocates Alcibiades' advances by offering nothing more than a discussion and an explanation (presumably of his virtuous abstinence).

Socrates, and probably Plato, thought that desire should be aimed only at what was good. In *Laws* and in the *Republic*, Plato talks about sexual desire being rechannelled into more worthwhile aims for the good of the state. Also in *Laws*, a concern is expressed that if society is relaxed to the extent that men and women can spend more time together, then there would need to be determined surveillance of the young to stop them from constantly seeking to fulfil their mutual sexual desires.

> But when we come to the amorous passions of children of both sexes and of men for women and women for men, passions which have been the cause of countless woes both to individuals and to whole States, how is one to guard against these, or what remedy can one apply so as to find a way of escape in all such cases from a danger such as this?
>
> Plato, *Laws* 836a–b

S & C In Book 7 of the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle discusses both restraint and lack of restraint. He and Plato both argue that desire should be resisted by those who wish to live morally. The ethics of resisting desire are also considered in the Greek tragedies of the 5th century. The opening speeches of Aphrodite and Hippolytus in Euripides' 'Hippolytus' are also worth considering.

In *Symposium*, Diotima refers to desire as a creative search for immortality, either through procreation or 'mental pregnancy' which can result in laws, ideas or works of art.

In *Phaedrus*, Socrates compares the soul to two horses. The black horse represents instinctive desire and the white horse is moderation. A charioteer has the job of steering horses who would naturally oppose each other.

Homoerotic relationships

In the *Symposium*, Pausanias, Eryximachus, Phaedrus and Alcibiades all suggest that same sex, pederastic relationships could be useful to the state. These connections were a way for the older male generation to pass down their knowledge and virtue. Pausanias and Eryximachus take the time in their speeches to attempt to justify the sexual gratification which an erastes would receive from his eromenos. Diotima suggests to Socrates that homoerotic relationships produce ideas and virtue and that this bond is stronger than the bond which produces children.

homoerotic same-sex relationship. It is often difficult for modern audiences to appreciate the complexities involved in same-sex relationships in ancient Greece. Therefore, relationships will be referred to as 'homoerotic' rather than 'homosexual'

Aristophanes' so-called 'story of the spheres' proposes a natural explanation for **homoerotic** relationships. His speech also refers to the accusation of immorality levelled at men in homoerotic relationships but counters this by saying that males in such relationships are more manly and courageous than men in heterosexual relationships. He may here be referring to relationships such as the lasting bond between Pausanias and Phaedrus, which Pausanias describes in *Symposium*. It was more usual for an erastes/eromenos pair to last only until the eromenos reached adulthood.

In the *Lysis*, Plato covers the differences between friendship and love between men and considers which should come first. In the *Phaedrus*, it is suggested that friendship should come before a sexual relationship. In Pausanias' speech in *Symposium* he stresses the importance of finding the right partner, although he acknowledges how difficult this is.

> I mean, there's no telling how boys are going to turn out – whether their minds or their bodies will end up good or bad.
>
> Plato, *Symposium* 181e

S & C Pausanias refers to lasting homoerotic relationships as examples of Uranian Eros; the feelings he explains might be close to the modern idea of homosexuality. Watch *Brokeback Mountain* (2006) and *Behind the Candelabra* (2013) and compare the representation of and attitudes towards homosexual relationships in these films with Pausanias' explanation.

S & C Plato's works have been used in more recent history to determine whether or not homosexuality is natural. How helpful is it to use Plato's works in this way?

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

'To describe what "Greek love" is – the desire of men for men, its institutions and practices – allows us to explore the more contentious issue of what "Greek love" means for us today'. 'Love, Sex and Tragedy' p. 55 (Goldhill, John Murray 2005).

Do you think that it is helpful to look at Greek attitudes towards homoerotic relationships when considering modern homosexuality?

Ironically, there are many references in Aristophanes' own plays to effeminate men who are 'receivers' in homosexual relationships. Such behaviour may also have resulted in the offender being deprived of his citizen rights. In the *Laws*, legislation against homoerotic relationships and prostitution is discussed. Homoerotic relationships are described by the Athenian as unnatural; he explains that homoerotic practices originally arose because of a failure to control desire.

> And whether one makes the observation in earnest or in jest, one certainly should not fail to observe that when male unites with female for procreation the pleasure experienced is held to be due to nature, but contrary to nature when male mates with male or female with female, and that those first guilty of such enormities were impelled by their slavery to pleasure.
>
> Plato, *Laws* 636c

IDEAS REGARDING THE NATURE OF 'GOOD' AND 'BAD' CONDUCT WHICH EMERGE

In Plato's dialogues Love can create good conduct. Homoerotic relationships encourage each partner to behave in an admirable way in front of the other: this leads to honourable and sometimes daring behaviour which is useful for the state, particularly on the battlefield. In the *Symposium*, Diotima suggests that philosophers can develop their thinking about Love until they are able to identify what is truly beautiful in life; what is beautiful is also what is good. This **ascent** necessarily involved moderating sexual desire. To Alcibiades' frustration, Socrates has achieved this moderation which has, in turn, made Socrates a better soldier.

Reproduction is celebrated by Diotima as the creation of immortality. Fidelity and the creation of the next generation were both very important and useful to an ordered state.

ascent the culmination of a philosophical argument, in which the philosopher draws together the strands of his/her argument to produce a reasoned and impassioned conclusion

HOW PLATO'S CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT INFLUENCED HIS IDEAS

The events described in the *Symposium* take place in 416 BC but the dialogue was first read at some point between 384 and 379 BC. In 416 BC, despite still being embroiled in the Peloponnesian War, Athens was full of promise. The Sicilian Expedition was leaving, led by the young general, Alcibiades. However, by 404 BC, the Athenians were suffering the consequences of this expedition, which had quickly turned into a disaster. Alcibiades had been prosecuted for the failure, gone over to the Spartans and ended up in the Persian court and, by 404 BC, he was now dead. He had become a very different figure from the carefree young lover depicted in *Symposium*. The passion which he struggled to control in the *Symposium* was the same passion which had led to the misguided campaign in Sicily. Thucydides, the historian of the Peloponnesian War, refers to uncontrolled and unreasoning desire when explaining the reasons behind the expedition.

> And desire to make an expedition struck everyone equally: the older men thought that they would either conquer wherever they sailed or that nothing bad could befall such a great power as Athens, the younger men loved the idea of seeing and experiencing somewhere new, in full confidence that they would be safe.
>
> Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War* 6.24.3

Socrates was executed in 399 BC on charges of 'corrupting the youth' of Athens. Plato himself left Athens after Socrates' death and travelled around the Mediterranean. Twenty years later, in *Symposium*, Plato shows Socrates attempting to moderate Alcibiades' impulsive behaviour. *Symposium* and, shortly after, *Republic* were both written in a time of political turmoil and insecurity in Athens. A group of philosophers known as the **Sophists** were teaching rich young Athenians for a price. However, many considered them responsible for undermining the state. Plato himself was generally hostile to these Sophists and set up the Academy in 387 BC, perhaps in response to their growing influence and maybe also to rehabilitate the reputation of Socrates.

sophistry a philosophical movement which prized oratory and the power of persuasion

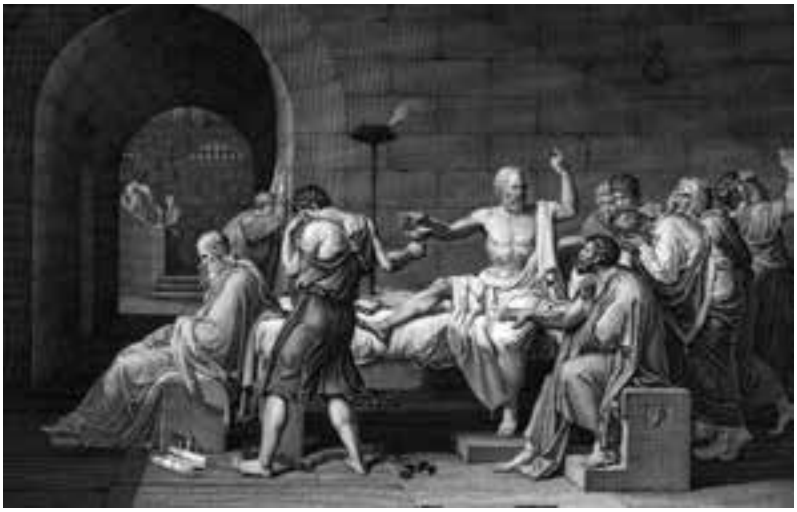


FIGURE 1.19
The execution of Socrates.

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

'The erotic world of Plato's dialogues is in part, of course, just that of his society.' From the introduction to 'Plato on Love', ed. Reeve (Hackett 2006).

How accurately do you feel that Plato replicates the world and views of his society in his dialogues?

ACTIVITY

You are setting up a society from scratch. What laws would you make regarding sexual behaviour and why?

HOW THESE IDEAS MIGHT HAVE BEEN RECEIVED BY HIS CONTEMPORARY AUDIENCE

There are suggestions in Plato that pederasty, homoerotic relationships and prostitution were all topics which were interesting to his contemporary audience. As he seems to draw conflicting conclusions about each, his readers might therefore be able to read what they wanted to.

All Greeks will have learned at least some of their moral outlook from Homer. In the epics, the gods display unfettered desire but this has no consequence. Calypso and Circe, both goddesses, want sex with Odysseus. Odysseus cannot resist them, as he is only a mortal, but he is able to use their desires to ensure his own safety. Odysseus and Penelope in the *Odyssey* represent the archetypal married couple. Sex in their relationship seems to confirm their love and, as they lie together in Book 23, Athene delays the dawn. After they are reunited they talk through their thoughts and feelings in an equal way. The deaths of the Greek and Trojan soldiers in the Trojan War are blamed on the anger of Achilles. However, the destructive affair between Helen and Paris is mentioned throughout the *Iliad*. Plato's audience will have approached his dialogues from this background.

By 404 BC, Athens had lost the Peloponnesian War against Sparta. They had also lost their empire and the prestige which went with that. Just as the Athenians will have felt that their way of life had been vindicated by the wars against the Persians at the start of the 5th century, they will have questioned their whole approach as the century drew to a close. In the time during which Plato was active, the Athenians had also lived through political turmoil: authoritarian oligarchy had been followed by a reborn democracy. It is therefore hard to imagine that Plato's audience could have read the *Symposium*, in particular, without all this on their mind.

EXAM TIP

Remember that you need to learn and consider the ideas which are expressed in Plato. You will not be asked about his style or characterisation. Focus just on the opinions which are expressed.

EXPLORE FURTHER

Read the full texts of *Symposium*, the second half of *Phaedrus* and excerpts from *Republic* (III 402d–403c, V 459–461) and *Laws (VIII 835c–842a).*

TOPIC REVIEW

These questions should draw on your knowledge of the whole topic, so think carefully about the different things you have learned (check the Topic Overview on p. 17).

1. What are Plato's opinions on love and desire?
2. What are Plato's opinions on how lovers should behave?
3. What are Plato's opinions on healthy and unhealthy relationships?
4. How important is context when considering Plato?

Further Reading

Dover, K. (2016), *Greek Homosexuality*, Bloomsbury Academic.
Kraut, R. (ed.) (1992), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, Cambridge University Press.
Miles, C. and Norwich, J. J. (1997), *Love in the Ancient World*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
Plato's (2001), *Symposium*. Commentary by Bloom. University of Chicago Press.
Waterfield, C. (1994), *Symposium*, Oxford University Press.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Homoerotic relationships were an important feature of Athenian life. Although it is difficult to establish Plato's own view, he does suggest that these relationships were beneficial to the state.

1. What was the name of Plato's tutor who features as a key character in many of his dialogues? [1]
2. How might Plato's ideas about homoerotic relationships have been received by the people of Athens? [10]

1.3 Seneca on Love and Desire

TOPIC OVERVIEW

- Seneca's ideas about love and desire, including:
  - the definitions of love
  - the physical symptoms of desire
  - the difference between love and desire
  - how and why desire should be controlled
  - how and why desire can be resisted
  - homoerotic relationships
- Ideas regarding the nature of 'good' and 'bad' conduct which emerge
- The influence of Stoicism on the ideas of Seneca
- How Seneca's contemporary context influenced his ideas
- How these ideas might have been received by his contemporary audience

There are no prescribed sources for this topic, but students are encouraged to read selections from Seneca's works and draw on any other appropriate sources and evidence they have studied in the extended-response exam questions. Here are some suggestions:

- Campbell, R. (1969), *Seneca: Letters from a Stoic*, Penguin Classics.
- Davie, J. (2008), *Seneca: Dialogues and Essays*, Oxford World Classics.
- Watling, E. (1966), *Seneca: Four Tragedies and Octavia*, Penguin Classics.

This topic explores the ideas put forward by Seneca, the Roman philosopher, dramatist and politician. The historians Tacitus and Cassius Dio give us a fairly detailed account of his life, and his philosophy and some of his dramatic works have survived to modern day. He wrote a number of essays as well as a collection of letters addressed to his friend (and fellow Stoic), Lucilius.

THE INFLUENCE OF STOICISM ON THE IDEAS OF SENECA

Seneca professed himself to be a Stoic. **Stoicism** saw humanity as one large community which was living according to the divine will. It urged people to elevate their reason above the desires of the body: this way a person might attain **apatheia**. The perfect Stoic was a person who felt no pain because they lived their life very simply, avoiding

Stoicism this was a philosophical school founded by Zeno in Greece in the 4th century BC; Stoicism maintained that reason and the soul were far more important than the body and it believed that virtus was the ultimate good

apatheia 'immunity to pain'; this is the desired state of mind for a Stoic; to achieve this, a Stoic must place reason above the natural desires of the body

FIGURE 1.20
Possible bust of Seneca, 1st century AD (Naples Archaeological Museum, Naples, Italy).

KEY INDIVIDUAL

Seneca
Date: *c.* 4 BC– AD 65

Politician, philosopher, essayist and dramatist

Lucius Annaeus Seneca (Seneca or Seneca the Younger) was born in Spain *c.* 4 BC. He was active in politics during the 1st century AD, although he fell out of favour with Emperor Caligula. He decided to retire from political life until Claudius became emperor in 41. Unfortunately, Claudius was also displeased with him and exiled him, supposedly for adultery with Claudius' niece. Eventually, Agrippina, the second wife of Emperor Claudius, requested Seneca's recall to Rome in 48 or 49 to act as a tutor to her son, the future Emperor Nero.

He remained Nero's loyal advisor, helping him to maintain a few stable years of leadership. As Nero grew, his leadership became more erratic. Finally, after Nero's murder of his own mother, Seneca lost his position as his advisor and in 62 he finally decided to retire once more into private life. However, a conspiracy to overthrow Nero seemed to implicate the retired Seneca: Nero ordered Seneca to commit suicide, which he did in 65.

everything but the most basic of needs (food, water, clothing and shelter). It was only by living in this way that a person could truly let their reason, which sets us apart from animals, be master over their bodies.

This very simple existence was obviously a huge influence on Seneca's ideas. How strictly Seneca lived by his own ideals is sometimes questioned (see p. 39). Nevertheless, in his writings he presents himself as a true Stoic and, therefore, he believes that the true 'wise man' lives purely for the soul.

The Stoic wise man was characterised as someone who needed nothing. Ultimate happiness came from the control of emotions: the true wise man would feel the influence of neither pleasure nor pain. He could gain a great fortune and would be no happier for it; he could lose everything he owned and be no less happy. The aim of the wise man was to attain virtus or **aretē**, which came from freeing himself of the desires of the body (**vices**) and giving full authority to reason.

Seneca seems to modify Stoicism slightly for his audience. He still shuns the unnecessary vices of human life and seeks to free reason from the shackles of the body, but he also advocates friendship and permits grief, which earlier Stoicism did not. He even paints the path to apatheia as a difficult one, one in which we have to battle with our human weaknesses. In this way, Seneca propounds a 'milder' Stoicism, which allows to the wise man human interaction and, therefore, love. However, love to Seneca is a very pure thing, completely separated from the desires of the body.

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

Robin Campbell writes of the early Stoicism and Seneca's interpretation of it:

> Despite its wide acceptance in educated circles, early Stoicism had a forbidding aspect which went far to explain its failure to influence the masses. […] [Seneca's] letters and essays show a Stoicism more closely reconciled with the facts and frailty of human nature.

Campbell claims that Stoicism struggled to be accepted by the majority of people. What do you think are the main problems with Stoicism which make it so hard for people to accept? What does Seneca do to popularise it?

EXPLORE FURTHER

Campbell, R. (1969), *Seneca: Letters from a Stoic* (Introduction), Penguin Classics.

aretē 'virtue' or 'goodness'; this is a difficult concept to define, but it is central to several ancient Greek philosophies; in Stoicism, it is the way of life attained by the complete subjugation of bodily desires

vice in Stoic philosophy, a 'vice' was a moral defectiveness; this included indulging in any of the desires or emotions which are attributed to the body, such as gluttony, lust, anger and material desires such as ambition and greed

SENECA'S IDEAS ABOUT LOVE AND DESIRE

The definitions of love

Seneca seems to say that love is something in which the wise man can engage. The love which preoccupies Seneca is closer to friendship than romantic love, though there are similarities which he also admits:

> No doubt the passion of lovers has something similar to friendship; you might say that it is maddened friendship.
>
> Seneca, *Letters on Morality* 9.11

So how does Seneca define the love of friendship? In the ninth letter of his collection, *Letters on Morality*, Seneca tells us that the archetypal wise man does not need friends, but rather he wants them. This is in keeping with his Stoic philosophy, since the wise man should not need anything. According to Seneca:

> It is not the utility of it which draws [the wise man] to friendship, but a natural instinct. For, just like there is an innate pleasantness for us in other things, so there is in friendship.
>
> Seneca, *Letters on Morality* 9.17

This reflects the Stoic tradition of humanity as one large community. However, it differs from the traditional view of the Stoic wise man who lives by himself and whose contentment comes only from himself. Seneca claims that self-contentment is important, but to live without friendship is no life at all.

The key to Seneca's view on love and friendship is the idea that there is no thought of advantage in the love in which the wise man engages. To expect favours from a friend is not in keeping with the Stoic way of life. Seneca states very plainly that his reasons for making a friend are:

> To have someone I can die for, to have someone I can follow into exile, for whose death I might exchange my own and pay the price instead.
>
> Seneca, *Letters on Morality* 9.10

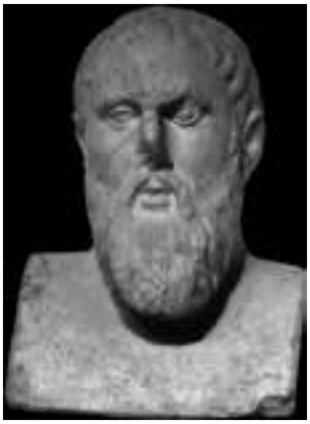


FIGURE 1.21
Statue of Zeno, the founder of Stoicism, 2nd century BC (Capitoline Museum, Rome, Italy).

Love is about what you can give to the other person rather than what you can gain. This is a view which Seneca also repeats in letter 48 from his collection. He says that friendship is an act of community and that a person who only looks after themselves cannot live happily:

> You must live for another, if you want to live for yourself.
>
> Seneca, *Letters on Morality* 48.2

This definition of love persists throughout his letters, even when he is talking about his own wife, Paulina. In letter 104, Seneca is talking of his ill health and the concern his wife is showing for him. Seneca presents his relationship with his wife as pure love, with no thought of advantage. Seneca states that he would do anything for Paulina and it is for her sake that he is taking better care of himself in his old age. Because Paulina loves him so much, in his concern for her he has started to take better care of himself. After all, asks Seneca:

> For what could be more pleasant than to be so dear to a wife that because of this you become dearer to yourself?
>
> Seneca, *Letters on Morality* 104.5

Also central to Seneca's definitions of love was the fact that love had to be mutual. He tells us that:

> If you want to be loved, then love.
>
> Seneca, *Letters on Morality* 9.6

This maxim is very important to Seneca. Love has to be earned, and the way to earn it is through sharing in it. This ties in neatly with his other ideas on love: live for another, love not for advantage and love to be loved. The cultivation of this 'pure' love is central to Seneca's beliefs.

The differences between love and desire

Seneca is clear on the difference between love and desire. Love is a sort of friendship; desire is the physical longing of the body. Stoics should put reason above the physical

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

Anna Motto claims that for Seneca:

> True love is, in many ways, analogous to an ideal friendship: both arise from mutual, genuine affection; neither is propelled by any ulterior motive stemming from greed, profit, ambition, renown.

Do you think that love or, indeed, friendship can be defined in these terms? What do you think friendship is?

needs of the body, and therefore to indulge them is contrary to the Stoic way of life. Consequently, Seneca is quite condemning of 'desire' and 'lust'.

What about romantic love? Does Seneca have an issue with love which goes beyond his defined 'pure' love? As we have seen (letter 9.11), Seneca does admit that love of this kind is something like a 'maddened friendship'. It is 'maddened', though, because there is a kind of advantage inherent in it. Seneca claims that romantic love:

> disregarding all other things, fires up souls into the desire for the beautiful object, not without the hope of mutual affection. So what, then? Does a foul passion come from the more honourable cause?
>
> Seneca, *Letters on Morality* 9.11

What is Seneca saying here? He seems to suggest that hope for a mutual affection from the object of our desire is an advantage in itself. From this affection comes a 'foul passion', which could be taken as sexual intercourse. It is this 'advantage' which is sought in love. Therefore, it is not the friendship which Seneca talked of earlier; romantic love and the desires which come with it are associated with the Stoic vices.

In fact, lust is a common victim of his attacks. Seneca often wrote of the need to resist the vices and how they can easily and totally corrupt a person. However, he states in one of his essays on morality:

> But there is a dishonourable stain on those who throw themselves into gluttonous pleasures and lust.
>
> Seneca, *On the Shortness of Life* 7.1

Lust and gluttony are, to Seneca, the worst of the vices. Therefore, there is a great difference in Seneca's mind between pure love and desire.

The physical symptoms of desire

Seneca saw desire as a way through which the body took control of the mind. The indulgence of lust was simply the overthrowing of reason. Therefore, Seneca took a very dim view of the symptoms of desire. The overindulgence of desire leads to a ruining of the body as Seneca is keen to emphasise with rather graphic language:

> […] when pleasures, which have been enacted on a body too small to have taken them, have begun to fester […]
>
> Seneca, *Letters on Morality* 59.17

S & C

The Latin word which Seneca uses to mean 'to fester' is *suppurare*. This is quite a graphic word and it gives us our English word 'suppurate'. Look up the definition of 'suppurate' and you will have a good idea of why this word creates an image of infected wounds.

The use of the word 'fester' conjures up images of infected wounds, which is exactly how Seneca sees these lustful pursuits. Each time you give in to desire, you are creating a new wound in your soul; the more you give in, the more infected your soul becomes. His condemnation of lust is absolute and he further elucidates on the damage done by lust in another of his works:

> He is not assaulted by the fear of poverty, not by the troubles of riches, not by the stings of lust which rips the soul apart through its pleasure.
>
> Seneca, *Consolation to Marcia* 19.6

Here, Seneca is referring to Marcia's son, who has died. He is reassuring her that he is beyond the suffering of human life during which desire and lust do damage to our souls. This is contrary to the aims of Stoicism.

As well as the symptoms which appear in our souls, Seneca is also aware of the clues which our bodies give. In an essay on anger, Seneca says:

> lust and fear and boldness give their own indications and are able to be recognised; for no overly violent passion enters us which does not change our expression.
>
> Seneca, *On Anger* 1.7

He tells us that our face is a key indicator of any 'violent passion', including desire. He also explores this idea in one of his tragic plays. In *Phaedra*, the title character is consumed by an 'unnatural' love of her stepson, Hippolytus. The Romans considered relations by marriage in the same light as relations by blood, and so Phaedra's desires are incestuous.

Phaedra's longing for Hippolytus is clearly very strong, and Seneca uses the term 'madness' to describe it. He also shows us the physical effects it has on Phaedra. The Nurse describes to the chorus the way her mistress is acting because of her all-consuming desire:

> […] she feels no concern for food
> Or her health; she goes around on uncertain feet,
> Now completely drained of her strength: no more the same liveliness,
> No more the reddish hue showing on that shining face;
> Her limbs are ravaged with care, now her steps tremble
> And the gentle beauty has fallen from her shining form.
>
> Seneca, *Phaedra* 373–378

Notice that Seneca represents Phaedra as losing her strength, her grace and her beauty. Desire has a negative effect on the body and therefore represents the vice which Seneca argues that it is. Of course, one could perhaps argue that this is an unnatural desire in Seneca's eyes, and therefore different from a desire between two people for whom it is permitted. However, Seneca maintains that the wise man should have control over sexual desire; therefore, the selfish indulgence of any desire is likely to be 'unnatural' in the opinion of Seneca.

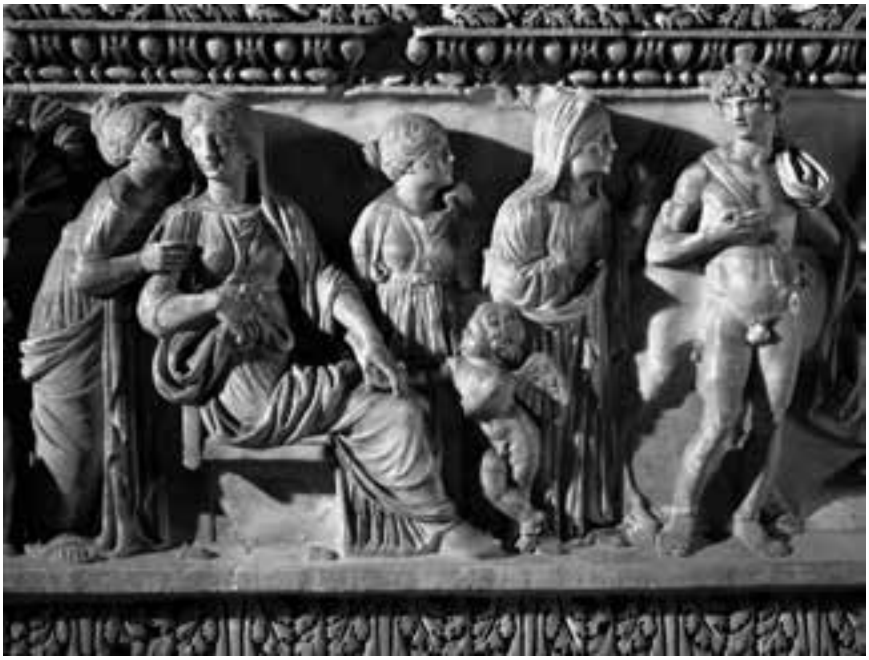


FIGURE 1.22
Relief of a sarcophagus showing the story of Phaedra and Hippolytus, 3rd century BC (Tripoli, Libya). Notice the Nurse whispering in Phaedra's ear and Cupid (god of desire) taking her by the hand to lead her towards Hippolytus.

How and why desire should be controlled

Apart from the effects on the body and soul, Seneca thinks that desire should be controlled so that reason can rule. He discusses the problems of human passions and the need for them to be ruled by reason:

> If you give any passions to the wise man, his reason will be unequal to them and, as if on some rushing stream, it will be carried away […] And so, if reason succeeds, passions will not even begin; if they do commence, though reason is unwilling, then they will persist, though reason is unwilling. After all, it is easier to keep them in check when they have just begun than to rule them when they are at full force.
>
> Seneca, *Letters on Morality* 85.6 and 9

It is important to nip human passions in the bud in order to gain control of them before they build up into 'some rushing stream'. Seneca is very keen to emphasise the importance of the body's subservience to reason, not the other way around.

However, Seneca does see the need for desire. He is aware that overindulgence is a bad thing, but that humanity does need lust to survive. In *Phaedra*, Seneca imagines a world without sex and concludes:

> Then the Earth will lie filthy in its foul site:
> The sea will stand empty, without any fish,
> And the sky will lack the bird and the forest the beast
> And the air will give passage only to the winds.
>
> Seneca, *Phaedra* 469–474

From these lines, it is clear that sex is a necessary part of human life:

> […] lust was given to humanity not for the sake of pleasure, but for the propagation of the human race […]
>
> Seneca, *Consolation to Helvia* 13.3

The birth of children is an important part of the Stoic idea of a human community. Desire is a crucial element in this process, and so Seneca recognises its place in the system. However, it is important that it is kept in good measure. Just as a Stoic must live by only the most basic food, drink and shelter, so too must a Stoic ensure that his desire is only used for the continuation of the human race:

> Let food subdue hunger and drink thirst; let lust flow the way in which it is necessary.
>
> Seneca, *On Tranquillity of Mind* 9.2

Therefore, desire must be controlled and the way to control it is through reason. Reason must act early to ensure that our human passions are subdued.

How and why desire can be resisted

Desire can be controlled, as we have seen, through reason. However, there is a way in which unwelcome desire can be resisted. This is abstinence from alcohol:

> Drunkenness does not create vices, but it brings them out; then the lusty man does not even wait for his bedroom, but permits to his desires as much as they seek without delay.
>
> Seneca, *Letters on Morality* 83.20

Drunkenness is commonly joined with desire in the writings of Seneca. He sees the two as inherently linked, and this is most obvious in what he says above. A drunk man loses his inhibitions and is prepared to indulge his lust in public. Seneca's Stoicism was very much against such public displays of affection, since it is pleasure- and thrill-seeking at its most shocking. Therefore, avoiding wine also avoids the rearing of non-Stoic desires.

Seneca's objection to desire is that it wastes our energies and distracts us from the pursuit of virtus. It is only by freeing ourselves of the vices that we can attain true happiness:

> Vices press upon us and surround us on all sides and they do not allow us to get up again and raise our eyes for the examination of truth, but they press down on us, submerged and fastened to our lust.
>
> Seneca, *On the Shortness of Life* 2.3

We cannot know truth if we are slaves to our own lust, which is 'a lowly thing, coming from the service of our filthy and vile limbs, and ultimately foul' (Seneca, *On Benefits* 7.2.2). Seneca in fact questions whether a life of seeking sexual pleasures is really what any person would want:

> Who of us mortals, to whom there remains any trace of humanity, would want to be titillated day and night and give his full attention to his body, leaving his mind behind?
>
> Seneca, *On the Shortness of Life* 5.4

Seneca again says that desire is something which neglects the mind. To Seneca, our mind is what sets us apart from animals, and so to engage in pure pleasures is to become animalistic and less human. Linked with this is Seneca's conception of 'god'. The Stoic god is rather different from the official polytheism of the Roman state: the Stoic god (or sometimes 'gods') is beyond the human flaws which Romans often projected onto the Olympian deities. Therefore, Seneca claims that what some people regard as 'good' (i.e. the bestial desires of humanity) cannot be good unless:

> […] humanity is more fortunate than god, since what has been prepared for us, god does not have to enjoy. For lust does not concern god […]
>
> Seneca, *Letters on Morality* 74.14

If god does not feel desire, then we also should not feel desire. After all, if desire were a good thing, then god would partake in it. Seneca then uses a *reductio ad absurdum* ('reduction to absurdity') to illustrate his point. If desire is a good thing, then god is less fortunate than humanity and humanity is less fortunate than animals, since they indulge their pleasures without thought of shame or repentance. This argument, through the absurdity of placing animals at the top of the universal hierarchy, was intended to convince Seneca's readers that desire is not a good thing and must be resisted. The wise men are:

> […] removed from all lust […] – these men Fortune herself in no way can surpass.
>
> Seneca, *On Benefits* 5.4.3

Homoerotic relationships

Seneca does not have a huge amount to say on the idea of homoerotic relationships. In letter 122, he voices his condemnation of men who dress as women, presumably because they are inviting the sexual advances of other men:

> Does it not seem to you to be living against nature, those who change their clothes for women's?
>
> Seneca, *Letters on Morality* 122.7

In the same letter, he also suggests that men should not engage in passive sex with other men:

> And although his sex ought to have rescued him from this abuse, will not even his age rescue him from it?
>
> Seneca, *Letters on Morality* 122.7

The suggestion here is that men who engage passively in sex are imitating young boys, which is a reference to the Greek custom of pederasty (see p. 12) and the Romans' allowance of homoerotic relationships with slaves and infames (see p. 13). Seneca says that 'his sex ought to have rescued him from this abuse'. This suggests that Seneca takes a dim view of male–male sexual relationships. He claims that the very fact that he is a man should preclude him from being involved in passive sex acts with other men.

If we consider what Seneca has said about the place of desire (i.e. that it is to be indulged just for reproduction (*Consolation to Helvia* 13.3)), then it is likely that he would not have approved of homoerotic relationships. To Seneca, these would represent giving in to lust without the consideration of reason. This is incompatible with a Stoic way of life.

IDEAS REGARDING THE NATURE OF 'GOOD' AND 'BAD' CONDUCT WHICH EMERGE

From what has been discussed, Seneca has a clear concept of good and bad when it comes to love and desire. He is always keen to emphasise these values in his writing. The idea of sex for pleasure, and the inconsistencies between men and women in this regard, comes under attack in letter 94:

> You know that he is wicked, the man who requires chastity from his wife but himself is a seducer of others' wives.
>
> Seneca, *Letters on Morality* 94.26

Seneca tells his reader that it is bad to expect wives to be chaste when their husbands are not. Clearly, 'good' conduct in this situation to Seneca is to abstain from sexual pleasures except for the necessary production of children.

In an essay in which he discusses the idea of slavery, Seneca is appalled that Romans can call anyone a 'slave' when they themselves are 'a slave of [their] lust and gluttony' (*On Benefits* 3.28.4). Seneca was uncomfortable with the idea of slavery and always advocated fair treatment of slaves since they were fellow humans. He points out the terrible irony that Romans cannot see the benefits they receive from slaves, even though they give free rein to their lust with slaves:

> And then you deny that any benefit can be given to you by your slave when you benefit from the kiss of another man's slave? What such inconsistency of the soul is this? At the same time you despise slaves and worship them!
>
> Seneca, *On Benefits* 3.28.5–6

For Seneca, it is terrible conduct to continue an affair with a slave: after all, sex of this kind is purely for pleasure, not producing children, and it is treating slaves as objects rather than humans.

HOW SENECA'S CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT INFLUENCED HIS IDEAS

Seneca fell in and out of political favour during his life. During his exile, he wrote essays on morality, influenced heavily by his Stoicism. When he returned to Rome to advise the young Nero, he wrote for him a treatise on how to behave. Later, of course, Nero began to diverge from the lessons of Seneca and Seneca found it more difficult to be associated with the rash emperor. Apparently, Seneca was the man who wrote Nero's defence to the senate as to why he assassinated his mother.

It must have been difficult for Seneca to marry his Stoic ideals, which condemned tyranny and praised community, with his position as advisor to a particularly dissolute tyrant. It is probably for this reason that Seneca chose to write a lot of philosophy: to show that his ideals were that of a Stoic, even if he could not always live by his own teachings.

Seneca was also one of a long line of philosophers who had used writing to spread their ideas to others. Epicurus (4th–3rd century BC) wrote essays on various aspects of Epicureanism, as well as letters to friends and relatives. Epicurus' letters often instructed on moral issues in much the same way as Seneca's. Another great influence on Seneca would have been the Greek philosopher Plato, who wrote many philosophical works. Seneca knew how powerful the written word could be in the transmission of philosophy.

EXPLORE FURTHER

Books 13–15 of Tacitus' *Annales* cover the life of Seneca and his influence on the Neronian regime. Michael Grant's 1956 Penguin Classics translation is excellent and readily available: the relevant sections for Seneca are Part Two, Chapters 10–15.

HOW THESE IDEAS MIGHT HAVE BEEN RECEIVED BY HIS CONTEMPORARY AUDIENCE

FIGURE 1.23
Bust of Emperor Nero, 1st century AD (Louvre, Paris, France).

Seneca lived through the reigns of five emperors: Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero. The 'stability' Augustus had brought to the Roman Empire was still relatively new and Caligula had done his best to shake that stability. The ideas of Stoicism must have seemed a little old-fashioned to some Romans, whose thoughts of 'community' and 'service to humanity' probably ended with the demise of the democratic Republic. Therefore, Seneca did come under some criticism for his promotion of moderate living, especially since he himself amassed a huge wealth, favoured as he was by Agrippina. Tacitus tells us that a Roman, Publius Suillius, attacked Seneca for his inconsistencies:

> By what wisdom, by what philosophical precepts had he amassed three hundred million sesterces within four years of royal friendship?
>
> Tacitus, *Annales* 13.42

The contemporary gossip about the difference in his philosophy and life was also commented upon by Cassius Dio who said:

> [Seneca] was disgraced not only in this, but also in other things, doing everything most contrary to the life about which he philosophised. For even though he had denounced tyrants, he became a tyrant tutor […]
>
> Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 61.10.2

While some Romans mocked the gap between his philosophy and life, his work did find favour among contemporary Stoics and some of the elite of Rome. He was considered as a great help in the early years of the reign of Nero and is often hailed as the man who deserves credit for the stability of the first five years of Nero's principate. Therefore, his philosophy was not necessarily always badly received. The very fact that it survives to the modern day shows that the Romans thought it was worthy of reproducing.

TOPIC REVIEW

These questions should draw on your knowledge of the whole topic, so think carefully about the different things you have learned (check the Topic Overview on p. 29).

1. How does Seneca define love?
2. What is the difference between love and desire, according to Seneca?
3. What are Seneca's opinions on healthy and unhealthy relationships?
4. How is Stoicism important in our understanding of Seneca's philosophy?

Further Reading

Campbell, R. (1969), *Seneca: Letters from a Stoic*, Penguin Classics.
Irving, W. (2009), *A Guide to the Good Life: The Ancient Art of Stoic Joy*, Oxford University Press.
Motto, A. (2007), *Seneca on Love*, accessed online.
Sandbach, F. (1989), *The Stoics*, Hackett Publishing.
Sharples, R. (1996), *Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics*, Routledge.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Seneca promoted moderation over excess and applied this principle in his ideas on love.

1. To which emperor did Seneca become a tutor? [1]
2. 'Plato, rather than Seneca, gives us the best idea of how a man in the ancient world should conduct himself in a relationship.' To what extent do you agree with this statement? [30]

1.4 Sappho

TOPIC OVERVIEW

- Learners should be able to identify and respond to the following:
  - purpose and intended audience of her poetry
  - the social and poetic context including the genre of the work
  - the issues of fragmentary material
  - use of literary devices and choice of language
  - use of themes and motifs
  - use of mythology
  - use of humour

Love and relationships in poetry

- In the work of Sappho (as prescribed) the representation of:
  - love and desire
  - men and women
  - sex
  - marriage
  - society and values
- Comparisons between the views in the literature and the thoughts put forward by Plato and Seneca, and societal ideas about men, women and marriage

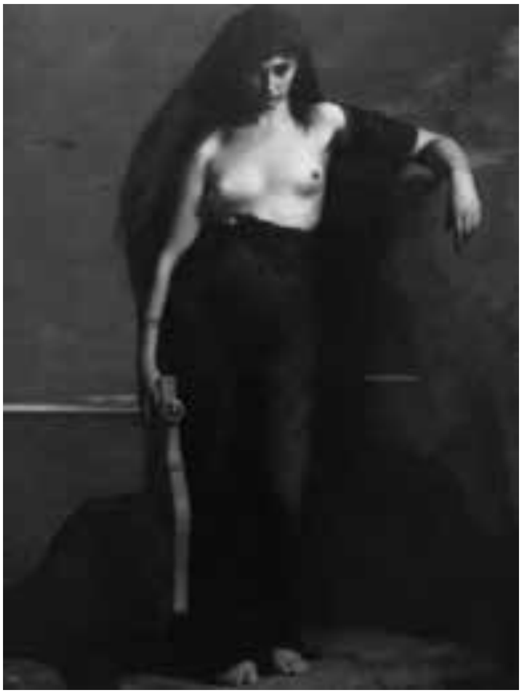
The following prescribed source is covered in this topic:

- Sappho, fragments

Don't forget that you will be given credit in the exam if you study extra sources and make relevant use of them in your answers.

This topic focuses on the poetry of Sappho to elicit a female perspective on love in the ancient world. Sappho's biography is essentially unknown and much of what we infer comes from her own poetry. She mentions her mother, her brothers and her daughter in her poems, but there is no reference to her husband. A source which suggests that she was married to Cercylas from Andros is very unlikely to be correct: Cercylas is very close to the Greek slang for penis. Andros, although a real Aegean island, is also Greek for man. A suggestion, therefore, that Sappho was married to Mr. Penis from Man Island should not be taken too seriously! It is more likely that this is a joke on her reputation for

FIGURE 1.24
Sappho standing on a cliff.



KEY INDIVIDUAL

Sappho
Date: Uncertain, *c.* 615–600 BC to *c.* 530 BC

Greek poet and possibly teacher

Sappho was born towards the end of the 7th century on Lesbos, an island in the north-east of the Aegean Sea. Very little is known of Sappho's personal life but it is likely that she was from a fairly wealthy family. She wrote a large number of poems that have survived to us mostly only in fragments but her work was famous in antiquity.

same-sex relationships. There is plenty of other doubtful information about Sappho. It was variously said that she was ugly, beautiful, homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual and sex-crazed. Ovid recounts the story that Sappho threw herself from a cliff over her love for a ferryman. Attitudes towards Sappho have changed as society's attitudes to love, sex and sexuality have changed. She has become an icon to lesbians and poets of every age.

In Figure 1.24, the brooding Sappho by Charles-Auguste Mengin (1853–1933) is in keeping with Ovid's story. She stands on the cliff edge but appears to glower back at the viewer, as if challenging us to love more deeply or sing more sweetly than she did. Her semi-nudity is striking, especially since the light of the painting seems to emanate from her exposed breasts. Her transparent clothing also suggests Sappho as a focus for male fantasies.

TIMELINE

750–700 BC	Homer active
615–600 BC	Sappho born on the island of Lesbos
608 BC	Athens vs Lesbos War of Sigeum
600–590 BC	Possible exile of Sappho to Sicily
546 BC	Croesus, king of Lydia, is defeated and Lydia becomes part of the Persian Empire
530 BC	Death of Sappho

PRESCRIBED SOURCE

Sappho, fragments

Date: 6th century BC

Author: Sappho, fragments

Genre: Lyric poetry

Collection: Fragments of poetry, whose original titles are unknown

Overview of her poetry: Sappho's poetry has survived in quotations from later sources and on fragments of papyrus found in Egypt

Significance: Sappho's poetry provides us with a unique female voice; her verse has been both celebrated and condemned by posterity for its power and honesty

Read it here: OCR source booklet. The numbering system used in the source booklet and for the fragments in this book follows the Loeb. CW

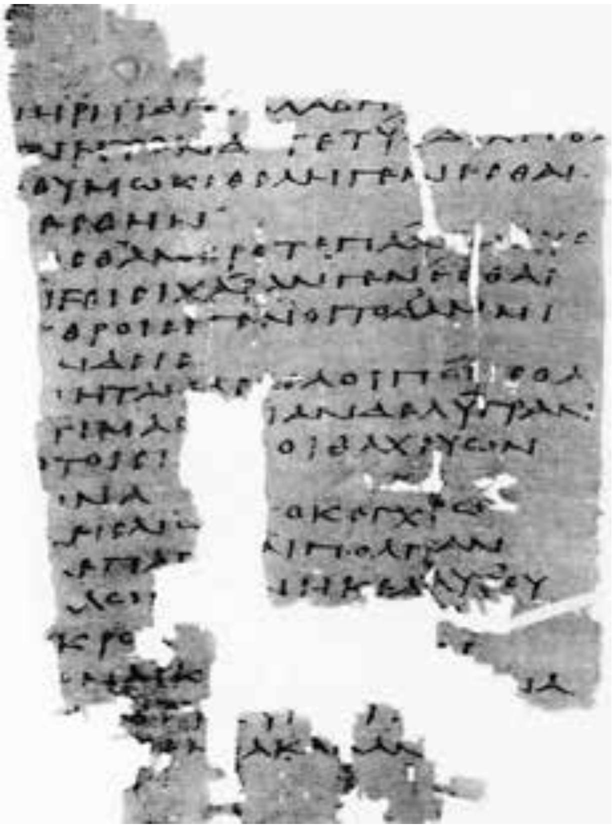


FIGURE 1.25 Fragments of Sappho's poetry found at Oxyrhynchus in Egypt.

LESBOS

Lesbian women were infamous across the ancient world for both their beauty and sexual behaviour. According to Alcaeus in fragment 130B, female beauty contests were held on Lesbos, perhaps in honour of the goddess Hera. In Athenian comedy, the Greek verb *lesbiazein*, meaning literally 'to behave like a lesbian', refers to a woman giving oral sex to a man.

The natural beauty of the island of Lesbos comes alive in her writing. Although we might imagine a fantasy landscape from her work, Lesbos itself is a verdant island where a wide variety of flowers and plants flourish in the mild, warm climate.

In the following excerpt, Sappho is calling Aphrodite to come to her aid from Crete.

PS

Poem 2 (excerpt)
Here, the cold water sings
Through the branches of the apple trees,
The whole place is covered with
The shadows of roses
And sleep flows down
From the trembling leaves.

Here, the horse-rearing valley
Flourishes with
The flowers of Spring
And the breezes blow gently
[…]*

Sappho lures Aphrodite to Lesbos with the promise of its natural beauty. The poet relishes the opportunity to describe the beauty of nature in great detail. Lesbos itself is seductively personified: the island sings and even pours down sleep from the leaves of its trees. Sappho's Lesbos seems the ideal environment in which to live and love.

In her surviving work, Sappho does not talk explicitly about the political situation on the island, although we know that there were plenty of changes in her lifetime. Sappho, along with her family, was probably exiled to Sicily at the start of the 6th century BC after a change of government on Lesbos. However, neither the political context nor her exile has had much effect on her surviving poetry. In Poem 98b, Sappho appears to regret not being able to provide a fancy headband for her daughter; this may be due to exile or because of laws passed on Lesbos limiting luxury. King Croesus of Lydia (595–*c.* 546 BC) was famed for his wealth and there are a number of references in Sappho's poetry to Lydian riches. There was also plenty of contact between Lesbos and the Greek world to the west.

Purpose and intended audience of her poetry

Sappho wrote poetry in a number of different styles. Plato referred to her as the tenth muse perhaps in reference not only to her talent but also to her uniqueness. As well as personal poems about love, there are also hymns to the gods and songs for wedding ceremonies. Her poetry was probably recited at male and female symposia (drinking parties) and some have suggested that she wrote with this intended audience in mind: this is hard to prove. The primary purpose of her poetry will have been to entertain, whether her audience were guests at a wedding or symposium or participants in a sacrifice.

Sappho was a musician as well as a poet and would have provided her own musical accompaniment to her poetry on her **lyre**, perhaps, therefore her poems could even be considered more as songs. She is credited with the invention of the **plectrum** and must

lyre (pl. **lyres**) a stringed musical instrument played, after Sappho's time, with a plectrum

plectrum (pl. **plectra**) a small flat object used to pluck or strum the strings of a lyre to produce a sound therefore have had a unique playing style, crafted to fit the metre, stress and tone of her poetry. Unfortunately, this aspect of her talent is lost to us.

Poem 118
Come my divine Lyre,
Speak to me,
Find your voice!

In this fragment (and in Figure 1.26), Sappho and her lyre look to each other for inspiration. Her playing will give the lyre voice which will, in turn, inspire Sappho to produce her poetry. This is an interesting comment from the poet about the production of and inspiration behind her work.

There is some discussion about whether she would have performed her poems as a **monody** or as part of a **chorus**. It is probably true to say that the public performance of her poetry would have been choral but we cannot tell how the lines might have been delivered. This might also change the impact of those poems when she writes in the first person. We can never presume that Sappho's poems are autobiographical. Even if the subject is 'I', it is still not certain either that Sappho is referring to herself or that the poem would have been a solo performance.

Sappho frequently refers to her companions in her poetry and occasionally the name of a particular girl is repeated. Much has been written about the relationship between Sappho and her companions. Scholars have described these girls variously as her students, fellow poets, members of a religious cult, lovers and friends.

monody (pl. **monodies**, adj. **monodic)** the solo performance of poetry. Monody is associated with personal, intimate poetry

chorus (pl. **choruses**) a number of performers singing together, which is a familiar feature of Greek drama. Choruses would also perform poems/songs at religious rituals or weddings

Poem 160
Now, for my companions,
I will sing these songs beautifully

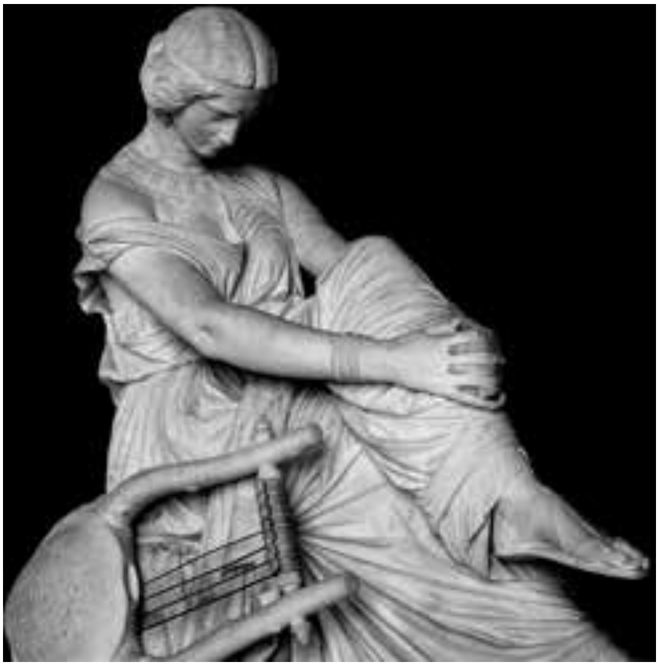


FIGURE 1.26
Sappho sits with her lyre.

thiasos (Greek pl. **thiasoi**) a religious group which would perform at rituals

Although it is easy, and dangerous, to read too much into short fragments of poetry, ideas have developed of Sappho as a mentor for a group of young girls or as the head of a **thiasos**. Due to the sexual content of some of her verses, it has also been suggested that sexual relationships formed part of the mentoring process.

Such relationships may therefore have had a function similar to male erastes/eromenos relationships. We can, at least, imagine Sappho and her companions performing their poems for each other and developing their work together.

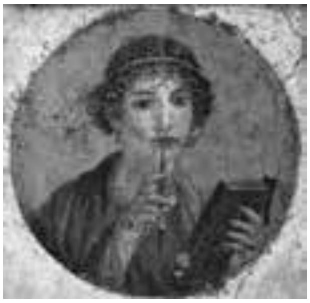


FIGURE 1.27
Fresco of Sappho.

ACTIVITY

Choose one of Sappho's poems and find a modern song which expresses the similar feelings. Which do you think is more effective and why?

The social and poetic context including the genre of the work

Sappho wrote **lyric** poetry and was very influential on the development of this genre. Her style is usually very succinct and her poems are generally made up of short sentences grouped into short **stanza**s.

Sappho herself and other poets of the period (particularly Alcaeus) are key sources for what Lesbian society was like in the 6th century BC. Her festive poetry suggests a leisured lifestyle of weddings and relationships in the fragrant countryside. As we have mentioned, Sappho came from an aristocratic family and there are some derogatory references to the less refined elements of Lesbian society. In the following poem, the poet is disappointed that her lover should prefer a farm girl. Her rustic nature is stressed through the repetition of 'farm' and 'farming'. There is also humour on the final line. The girl does not know how to show herself off; slim ankles were considered attractive and indicative of a leisured lifestyle. The irony here is that as a farm girl, her ankles are likely to be thickened from working in the fields.

PS

Poem 57
What farm girl, in her farming clothes
Charms your mind?
Does she even know how to pull up her ragged dress over her ankles?

PS

Poem 39
Embroidered sandals covered her feet,
Beautiful Lydian workmanship

lyric poetry with love as its principal theme, which would usually be performed accompanied with a lyre (hence its name). Performances of lyric poetry would take place at symposia and also at religious rituals

stanza (pl. **stanzas**) a short verse of poetry

There are plenty of references to luxuries in her poetry and an image emerges of Sappho and her friends adorning themselves with beautiful accessories and perfuming themselves with rich ingredients – all to be worthy of the gods for whom their poetry is a gift. Lesbos was rich in traded goods as it occupied the space between the rich Lydian Empire to the east and the Greek cities to the west. Sappho refers to a number of different exotic locations in her poems. In the following poem, Sappho describes how fashions on Lesbos have changed since her mother's generation. At the end of this poem, she also refers to Sardis, the capital of the Lydian Empire.

Poem 98a
My mother said that,
In her day, it was all the rage for
A woman to tie up her hair
With a purple headband,
But that, if her hair was
More yellow than a flaming torch,
Then she should wear garlands
Of flowers in bloom
Recently […]*
A decorated headband
From Sardis […]*

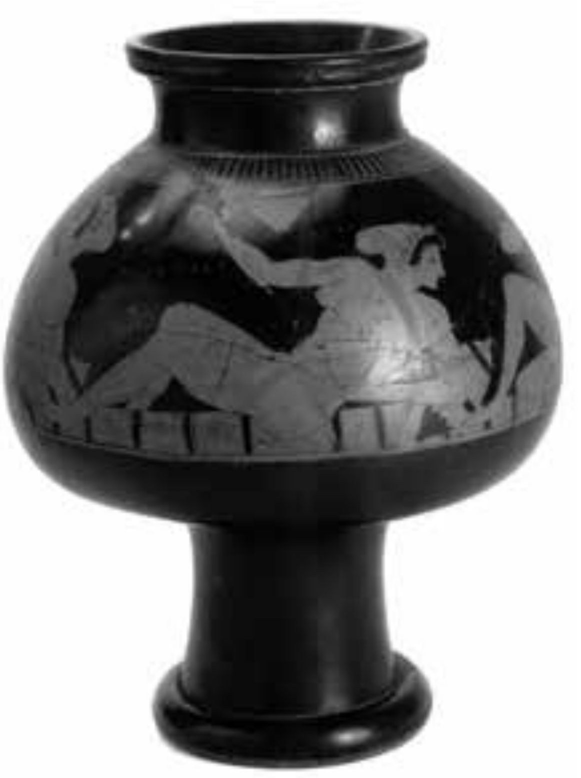
PS

Changing fashions suggests a society motivated by status. Lesbos would respond to the trends in mainland Greece and in Persia brought to the city by traders. Colour in the ancient world was achieved with expensive dyes and would therefore be an indication of wealth, particularly purple. As with the poem about the farm girl, the suggestion here is that those unaware of fashion would be less attractive.

The Homeric epics will, inevitably, have had an influence on Sappho's poetry. Sappho includes references to the Trojan War. In Poem 44, which is about the marriage of Hector and Andromache, Sappho writes in a metre and style reminiscent of Homer. The lines in this poem are longer, more like an epic hexameter line and Homeric epithets (e.g. Andromache is described as 'quick-glancing') are included. In Poem 1, when Sappho is praying for Aphrodite to come to her aid, we are reminded of the language of Diomedes' prayer to Athene in Iliad 5.115–7. Poem 31 begins as a traditional *makarismos* – a statement which begins with 'blessed is he who …', Odysseus' speech to Nausicaa in Odyssey 6.158–161 includes a similar phrase.

Alcaeus was another lyric poet who lived on the island of Lesbos. As a contemporary and, perhaps, lover of Sappho, there must have been a mutual influence on each other. In Alcaeus' poetry, he is complimentary of Sappho, saying that she 'smiles like honey' in fragment 384. Like Sappho, Alcaeus also wrote love poetry and religious hymns.

FIGURE 1.28
Greek vase from *c.* 505–500 showing a female symposium scene.



S & C

Look at Alcaeus' description of love from the perspective of a woman in Poem 10B and compare this with Sappho's poetry. Alcaeus Poem 34 also shares similarities with Sappho Poem 1 which suggests a mutual influence. Alcaeus' poetry does provide a fuller account of life on Lesbos.

Study question
Why do you think that lyric poetry is so popular for poems about love?

The issues of fragmentary material

Some of Sappho's poems have survived because they were quoted in other ancient sources. Others have been found among papyri found in a rubbish dump excavated next to the ancient Egyptian town of Oxyrhynchus. Figure 1.24 gives an idea of the difficulties of piecing together fragments of poetry which have been found torn and in different locations. The first fragment of Sappho's poetry was found in 1897 and there has been only one complete poem found (Poem 1, 'Hymn to Aphrodite'). Many of these fragments are as brief as one word. The work of discovering and reconstructing Sappho's poetry is ongoing; there are hopes that more of Sappho's poems may be found in the library of the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum. The most recent poem ('The Two Brothers') was discovered in a private collection in 2014 and then attributed to Sappho by the style and by the reference by name to Charaxus, known from other sources to be one of Sappho's brothers. Although some fragments are very brief, it is still possible to recognise the intensity of the meaning.

PS

Poem 168b
Gone are the moon and the
Pleiades.
And, in the middle of the night,
Time passes
And I sleep alone.

The darkness is indicative of the loneliness of the lover which is confirmed in the final line. In Poem 31, Sappho complains that her feelings have rendered her mute and in this narrative, the poet is asleep. The thoughts are therefore internalised and this creates the impression that the poetry is coming to us directly from the soul of the poet.

Use of literary devices and choice of language

topos (pl. **topoi**) a recurrent feature in literature. Topoi in Sappho include the pain of love, the bounty of nature, invocations of and personal relationships with the gods and the use of the metaphor of nature for sex.

In the following excerpt from the 'Hymn to Aphrodite', Sappho begins with the **topos** of a hymn to a goddess but then creates a dramatic image of her approach, fast and laced with foreboding. Aphrodite is listening to the prayer which is, in the first few lines, written in a typical form for an address to a god. Then, as soon as Aphrodite nods, she is quickly on her chariot and the feel of the poem changes as the pace increases. The focus shifts from the poet, to Aphrodite, to the cloud of sparrows. Adjectives are chosen carefully and added singly, or in pairs, to nouns in order to create an image using colours, shadows and sounds. The description also calls to mind the various journeys of the gods to earth described in Homeric poetry; this is reinforced by the use of Homeric epithets to describe the homes of the gods and the wings of the sparrows.

PS

Poem 1 (excerpt)
If you ever heard my voice before
From far away and came at my request,
Leaving your father's golden chambers,
Yoking your chariot:

Swift, beautiful sparrows,
Their close-packed wings
Whirling across the dark earth,
Brought you from the heavens
Down through the spreading sky
Quickly they came.

Another literary topos which Sappho uses is the shift of narrator during her poems to include the perspectives of the two, or three, participants in a relationship. The following poem addresses Abanthis and begins by inspiring her to write a poem for Gongylla. However, by the end of the third line (with the words 'my darling') we realise that Abanthis has felt this way before and that the narrator, perhaps Sappho, is also invested in the relationship. So, if Sappho was a mentor to these girls, it seems that she was also intimately involved in their lives. As the perspective of the narrator changes, so does our relationship with the poem. Abanthis' desire begins as poetic but then becomes changeable and sexual. The poem begins with Abanthis as the subject but ends with the poet referring to herself.

Poem 22
I call upon you, Abanthis,
Take up your lyre and sing of Gongyla
While desire again circles you, my darling.
For her dress aroused you,
As you gazed at it,
And I am thankful for that,
For the holy queen, Cyprian Aphrodite,
Once found fault with the way
I prayed.

Poem 16 juxtaposes an army arrayed for war with a woman whose walk and face enraptures the poet. As with Poems 1 and 22, our relationship with the poem again switches with the narrative focus. The poem begins in a repetitive style called a priamel: a list of **metaphorical** comparisons is made before the real subject of the poem is revealed.

Poem 16
The most beautiful sight in the whole world
Is, according to some,
A group of cavalry,
Others say infantry.
And still others a fleet of ships.
I think it is the one you love.

It's easy to explain
So that everyone understands:
Helen, the most beautiful woman on earth,
Abandoned her husband,

The most excellent of all men,
And sailed to Troy!

Without a thought for her daughter
Or her dear parents.
[…]* led her astray.

Now I am thinking about Anactoria
Who is not here with me.
I would rather see her lovely walk,
And her gleaming face,
Than look at all the chariots of the Lydians
And the foot soldiers with their weapons!
[…]*

hyperbole (adj. **hyperbolic**) exaggeration used for literary effect

metaphor (adj. **metaphorical**) comparison made for literary effect

However, these comparisons later become **hyperbolic** when Sappho compares vast armies and navies with one girl. After the surprise of this comparison, Sappho returns to **hyperbole** when she refers to the myth of Helen escaping to Troy. However, the use of Helen now suggests that Sappho feels resentment towards the girl introduced in the first stanza. Only in the final stanza does the reader learn her name, Anactoria. Another topos used in Sappho is the 'lover's gaze' which hints, pathetically, that a gaze is all which is available.

The rhythm, alliteration, assonance and repetition in Sappho's poetry combine to create an enchanting feel which will only have been increased by the accompanying music. The mixolydian scale, in which Sappho would have played, would have created a haunting melody.

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

James Davidson in 'The Greeks and Greek Love' (Phoenix 2007) says the following about Poem 16:

> The poem has attracted much appreciation, and it is worth reading again in slow motion, as all Sappho's songs are, and just trying to write down your impressions of it, your sense of it, your understanding of what's going on and what's coming next line by line, being as honest with yourself as possible.

Consider using this approach with all of Sappho's poetry. How does it help us to analyse her work?

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

'Because women poets are emotionally disturbed, their poems are psychological outpourings, that is, not intellectual but ingenuous, artless, concerned with their inner emotional lives.'

M. Lefkowitz, 'Critical Stereotypes and the Poetry of Sappho' in *Reading Sappho* ed. E. Greene (University of California Press, 1996), p. 26.

Lefkowitz is not giving her own opinion here but is instead suggesting a possible view of female poets. Do you feel that these criticisms would be fair of Sappho's work? Why do you think such views of female poets exist?

Use of themes and motifs

Sappho's erotic poetry concentrates very much on topoi of thoughts and emotions. The things and people the poet loves seem to 'gleam', if only to the poet. This is an interesting comment on how people can appear so differently to a lover. In the following poem, she compares the gleam from a girl to the gleam from the moon amid the stars.

Poem 96 (excerpt)
But now she stands out among Lydian women!
Like the rosy-fingered moon

Among all the stars after sunset!
The light spreads over the salty sea
And the flowery fields!

The beautiful dew falls,
The roses and
The tender chervil
And the flowering melilot
Bloom.

She paces up and down,
She remembers gentle Atthis,
And the longing consumes her flighty soul!

Flowers and nature play an important role in the poetry. The fertility of nature and changes in nature are two other topoi used by Sappho. A verdant backdrop is created for Sappho's stories. Fruit in particular is used metaphorically. Apples are symbolic of love in the ancient world: the golden apple was the prize awarded by Paris in the beauty contest which led to the start of the Trojan War, and apples were scattered by

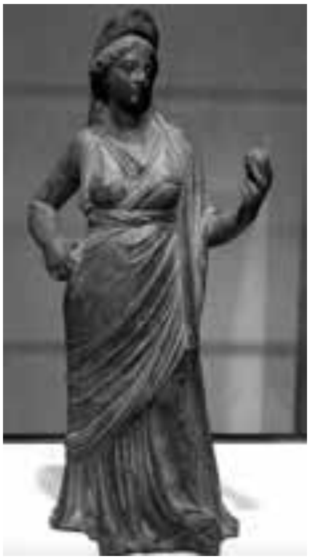


FIGURE 1.29
Statuette of Aphrodite holding an apple.

Hippomenes in his race with Atalanta. This sculpture of Aphrodite, the goddess of love, shows her holding an apple.

Roses are used to give a fragrance to the poetry and, to some scholars, are also suggestive of female genitalia. In Poem 96, flowers open in the moonlight and glisten with dew. If the flowers are metaphors for girls then there is variety in both and Sappho uses a wide vocabulary of flora. Flowers, as with the bloom of maidenhood, are also temporary so there is also a sadness to the metaphor.

Use of mythology

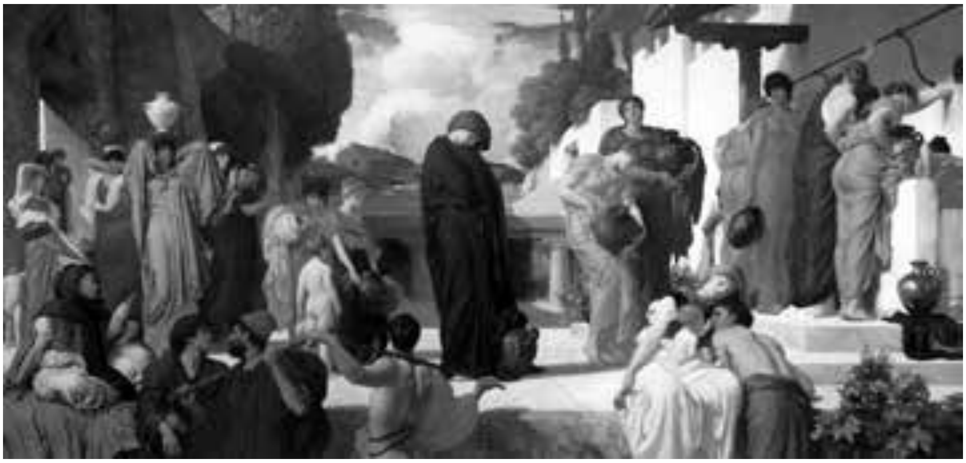
Sappho uses references to the Homeric world to draw analogies. However, there are important differences in the ways in which Sappho uses the story of the Trojan War. In Poem 44, the wedding between Hector and Andromache is a joyful affair and there is no sense of foreboding of what is to come for Hector (death at the hands of Achilles) and Andromache (slavery – see Figure 1.30).

In Poem 16, Helen has chosen to leave her husband, although he is described as the most excellent of men. She has also left those other figures of authority, her parents. Helen has also abandoned her responsibilities as a mother, leaving her daughter behind. Unfortunately, the poem is fragmentary and we are not told who or what has ‘led her astray’.

Sappho uses Helen as an example from mythology to which everyone can relate. She is compared to Anactoria who has left the poet behind as Helen left her husband. The poet moves from Helen’s famed beauty to the hold which Anactoria continues to have over her.

The gods appear frequently in the poems. Sappho may have performed her poems at the sanctuary on Lesbos dedicated to Zeus, Hera and Dionysus. In Poem 17, the poet appeals to Hera, as Agamemnon and Menelaus did when they came to Lesbos on their return from the Trojan War. Zeus and Dionysus are also referred to in this poem. In Poem 1, Aphrodite herself speaks to reassure Sappho that, in short, ‘what goes around comes around’. Sappho’s beloved who has spurned her will, herself, become a lover. Although she may not magically turn back to Sappho, the poem perhaps suggests that Sappho wants her beloved to empathise with the feelings of rejection and of loving despite oneself. Aphrodite will be her ally in this endeavour.

FIGURE 1.30
Painting showing Andromache as a captive among Greek women.



Poem 1 (excerpt)
“If she runs from you,
soon she will pursue;
if she does not accept gifts now
soon she will be giving them
if she does not love you now,
she will love you soon
even if she does not want to.”

Come to me again now, Queen,
Release me
From this great distress;
Accomplish for me
What my heart wishes to accomplish!
Be my ally.

Use of humour

Although many of Sappho’s poems are written in a light tone and many contain surprising reversals and comparisons, there are few instances of humour. Poem 110 was written to be performed within the context of the happy setting of a wedding and this may be why it includes sexual humour. After the couple had arrived at the bridegroom’s house they would retire to their chamber to consummate the marriage. A doorman would stand outside the room to repel any guest who would disrupt proceedings. The doorman described in Poem 110 has extremely large feet. Some scholars have suggested that Sappho is insinuating that the size of his feet gives an indication of the great size of his penis. The humour may be increased by the hyperbole used in the description. Poem 111 may also suggest the size of the bridegroom’s penis, where, again, hyperbole is used for comic effect.

Poem 110
The doorkeeper has size twenty-seven feet,
His sandals are made from five hides,
Ten shoemakers toiled over them

Study questions

1. How effectively do you feel that Sappho uses the various literary techniques described here?
2. Can you find other examples of these techniques in her poetry?

S & C

Read Catullus’ adaptation of Poem 31 in English or Latin (Catullus 51). Why has he written his own version of this poem and what changes has he made?

eros Sappho uses this word for 'love'. She also uses the adjective and verb formed from this word. In English we should think of eros as meaning passion or desire as well as love. In Poem 112, the bridegroom sees 'eros' on the face of his new bride

thumos Sappho uses this word for 'heart' or 'soul'. Thumos is used to indicate powerful desire as well as to illustrate the depth of anguish or pain. In Poem 1, the poet prays to Aphrodite not to overcome her 'thumos' with grief

pothos Sappho uses this term to indicate powerful 'desire'. In Poem 102, the poet is overcome with 'pothos'

IN THE WORK OF SAPPHO THE REPRESENTATION OF

Love and desire

Sappho is, justifiably, celebrated for her depiction of the physical effects of desire, for which she had a varied vocabulary (see left for three key words **eros, thumos** and **pothos** used by her in her poetry). We have Poem 31 because Longinus, the ancient literary critic, uses it in his work 'On the Sublime' as a perfect example of how to write about desire. The feelings Sappho describes are uncomfortable, and, occasionally, so painful that the poet yearns for death. The topos of comparing love with death is familiar in lyric poetry. Desire is expressed as 'limb-loosening' and as a 'delicate fire' which runs under the skin, the lover is dumbstruck and yet still able to express, with paradoxical eloquence, a 'certain longing' to die. The expression of desire in this poem is also particularly sensual. The physical symptoms of her frustration mimic the physical symptoms of orgasm: the poet's heart races, she sweats, a shiver passes over her and she collapses exhausted. Using sex itself as a metaphor for unrequited desire is another of Sappho's surprises.

Poem 31

PS

He seems to me equal to a god,
That man who sits facing you
Hearing your sweet voice
Close to him
And your charming laughter,
Which for me, honestly strikes terror into the heart in my breast

When I see you,
Even for a moment,
I can no longer speak.

My tongue breaks and, immediately
A delicate fire runs beneath my skin,
I see nothing with my eyes but
There is a buzzing in my ears,

And sweat pours over me
And a tremor
Seizes me all over

And I am greener
Than grass,
And I think that I am
On the point of death.

This poem includes a number of literary topoi familiar to readers of Sappho. The lover burns, is dumbstruck and blinded, her heart flutters and she finally feels as if she is dying. The focus of the poem is again switched quickly from the man who is listening to the woman he is sitting with. The man may be a specific character but he may also be any man who is lucky enough to sit with the beloved. The focus of the poem then finishes on the poet who is watching. The poet's self-destructive desire develops from hearing to seeing and then being rendered senseless and finally dying. The woman's voice and laughter are rendered erotic by the gaze of the lover.

Love is similarly all-consuming in the following poem: the poet recognises her obligations to society as a woman (weaving) but cannot fulfil them. She cannot understand the new feelings which are sweeping over her and calls to her mother for help. She recognises only the hand of Aphrodite but does not yet feel able to call directly on the goddess.

Poem 102
Sweet mother!
I cannot weave my web,
I am smitten by a boy
Because of slender Aphrodite.

In other poems, Sappho represents herself as being close to Aphrodite, the goddess of desire. In the 'Hymn to Aphrodite' (Poem 1), the presentation of Aphrodite's power is striking.

Poem 1 (excerpt)
If she runs from you,
soon she will pursue;
if she does not accept gifts now
soon she will be giving them
if she does not love you now,
she will love you soon
even if she does not want to.

Another topos which Sappho uses is the metaphor of war used to describe love: in Poem 16, a beautiful girl is compared to the wonderful sight of an army arrayed for battle and in Poem 1, Sappho refers to Aphrodite as her 'ally'.

ACTIVITY

Listen to the relatively modern pop songs 'Daylight and Darkness' by Smokey Robinson and 'Weak' by SWV. Compare both songs to Poems 31, 34 and 130 and note the similarities and differences.

Men and women

Although she uses all her poetic powers to describe female desire, male desire is represented by Sappho in a more obvious way. Carpenters are summoned to raise the roof of the bridal chamber because of the enormous size of the bridegroom. There is humour in the hyperbolic description but the comparison with Ares, the god of war, also means that the bridegroom is now an intimidating figure. This is especially true if the poem is imagined from the point of view of the bride who is anticipating her first experience of sex with this huge man. In this poem, male desire seems to threaten women.

Study question

Do you think that Sappho celebrates or warns against love?

Poem 111
Raise the roof,
Hymenaeus!
Lift it higher, carpenters,
Hymenaeus!
The bridegroom is coming,
Like Ares,
Bigger by far than the biggest man.

Men are generally absent from Sappho's extant erotic poetry. The man who appears in Poem 31 is an observer of the beautiful woman who sits across from him and he is a frustrating presence to the poet, who longs to be as close as he is. In other poems, Sappho shows that women have the power to create desire in men. The bridegroom in Poem 111 and the doorkeeper in Poem 110 are both ridiculed for their obvious sexual arousal. In Poem 15, Sappho also mocks her brother Charaxus, a merchant who behaved foolishly due to his desire for an Egyptian prostitute called Doricha, who boasts of the power she has over him.

The relationships between women seem tender and equal in the poems. However, the women themselves also appear flighty and changeable. Poems 49 and 131 chart the poet's on/off relationship with Atthis: in Poem 49, she loved Atthis but no longer, in Poem 131 Atthis used to love her but now loves another girl.

As it is likely that Sappho's poetry will have been performed in public, the clear references to female sexual desire (in Poems 94 and 96 in particular) may have been empowering and liberating for the women of Lesbos. In 5th-century Athens, Sappho was respected as a poet but feared as a role model. Stories of her ugliness and suicide began to emerge at this point perhaps to discourage other women from following her example.

Sex

Sex is a recurrent theme in Sappho's poetry but is usually expressed indirectly through metaphor or allusion. This has been evident in many of the poems mentioned already (Poems 31, 96, 110 and 111). The following poem has led some to suppose that the homoerotic sexual relationships to which Sappho refers in her poetry took place before the girls were married. The reference here to 'beautiful things' is deliberately vague: it leads us to imagine the heady days of youth, discovery and experimentation.

PS

Poem 24a
[…]*
You will remember
What we did
When we were young,

Many, beautiful things
[…]*

Poem 94 describes a passionate relationship which has recently ended, perhaps because one of the girls got married. The poem is one of Sappho's most erotic. The poet's memories move from her beloved's head to her neck and then further down her anointed body. The lovers then lie down together.

PS

Poem 94 (excerpt)
Remember all the wreaths
You placed around your head,
Violets, roses, crocuses
and […]* next to me

And the intricate garlands
Made from flowers
You placed around
Your lovely neck

You perfumed yourself
With so much perfume
You anointed yourself
As if you were a queen

And on a soft bed […]*
You satisfied your desire […]*

Shortly following her marriage a girl would lose her virginity and embark upon the dangerous process of pregnancy and childbirth. Poems 110 and 111 could both suggest that sex could be an intimidating prospect to young girls. The following poem compares a girl's virginity to a 'sweet red apple' which is out of reach. Using an apple to suggest female sexuality is a familiar topos of Sappho and this apple is particularly prized by the apple pickers. It is interesting that the apple pickers recognise but cannot reach the apple. If the apple denotes virginity/female sexuality and the apple pickers represent men, the poem is perhaps suggesting that female sexuality is beyond the reach of men. In the second half the metaphor of the hyacinth is used, only now the result seems more brutal as the flower, although still beautiful, is trodden by the feet of the shepherds.

Poem 105a
Just like the sweet apple reddening at the highest height
Of the highest branch, missed by the apple pickers -
No, they did not completely miss!
They just couldn't reach.

Poem 105c
Just like the hyacinth on a mountain,
Trodden by the feet of the shepherds,
And on the ground, a purple flower […]*

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

'It's tempting to see the emphasis on bridal virginity simply as a form of masculine oppression against younger women, lest they dare to enjoy their own sexuality and thus reduce their value as a commodity to a future husband.' p. 27 'Searching for Sappho' (Freeman. Norton 2016)

Why is this conclusion described as 'tempting'? To what extent do you feel that Sappho's poetry supports this conclusion?

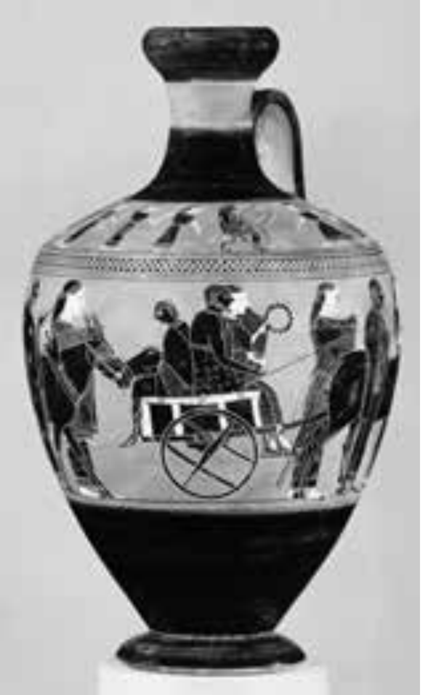
Marriage

Figure 1.31 shows the start of the wedding ceremony when the bride would leave her own house and process to the house of the groom. Once there she would be 'given away' by her father. There would then be a celebration, at the end of which the bride and groom would retreat to their chamber where they would consummate the wedding as their guests sang songs outside their door. A ritual attempt by her friends to 'save' the bride was repulsed by a doorkeeper. As we have seen earlier, the promise of sexual congress at the end of the wedding is bawdily hinted at in Poems 110 and 111. Perhaps the groom and the doorkeeper are both aroused at the thought of what is to transpire inside the bridal chamber. If these poems were indeed performed at weddings, such sexual references suggest an atmosphere of fun at the occasion. Sappho's wedding poems give us some information about the wider society of Lesbos, but there are no descriptions of married life.

PS

Poem 112
Lucky bridegroom, your marriage
Has worked out well for you,
Just as you dreamed that it would
You have the girl of your dreams.
"You look beautiful, your eyes [….]
Honey-sweet, love is poured
Over your beautiful face
[….]
Aphrodite has honoured you
Above all others.

FIGURE 1.31
Vase depicting a wedding procession with dancers and musicians.



Poem 112 is a beautiful expression of a bridegroom's joy. The repetition of 'you' and 'your' does, however, suggest the poet's regret that the bride has gone to him not her. Whereas Sappho has frequently mentioned the 'lover's gaze', the bridegroom's only view of his bride has been in his dreams.

Society and values

Sappho gives us a representation of her own society, her friendship with her girls. This may have been a thiasos or a school or even just a group of friends. Her poems show these girls learning about desire and then falling in and out of love. Their relationships are then brought to an end by marriage. There is no sense of shame at these homoerotic sexual relationships as they are described in poems intended for public performance. Women also lie down together on beds, which one would presume to be inside a house. The women of Sappho's poems enjoy sexual freedom. Their lives, unlike the lives of women in mainland Greece at the time, took place outside, in the glades of Lesbos.

Study question

How important is context when considering Sappho?

EXPLORE FURTHER

Only selected poems and excerpts from Sappho's poetry are included here. Read the rest of her poetry.

TOPIC REVIEW

These questions should draw on your knowledge of the whole topic, so think carefully about the different things you have learned (check the Topic Overview on p. 41).

1. What is the social and poetic context of Sappho's poetry?
2. What are Sappho's opinions on healthy and unhealthy relationships?
3. How successfully does Sappho use her poetry to express her ideas?
4. What do Sappho's poems say about love and desire?

Further Reading

Poochigian, A (2015), *Sappho*, Penguin Classics.
Burnett, A. P. (1998), *Three Archaic Poets: Archilochus, Alcaeus, Sappho*, BCP Paperback.
Carson, A. (2003), *If Not, Winter*. Virago.
Greene, E. (ed.) (1996), *Reading* Sappho, University of California Press.
Jenkyns, R. (ed.) (1982), *Three Classical Poets: Sappho, Catullus and Juvenal*, Harvard University Press.
Reynolds, M. (2000), *The Sappho Companion*, Chatto and Windus.

EXAM TIP

There will be something which you can say about almost every line. Don't worry if your ideas do not seem completely convincing – it is always worth writing more rather than less.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Source A: Sappho, Fragments

PS

Poem 16 (excerpt)
It's easy to explain
So that everyone understands:
Helen, the most beautiful woman on earth,
Abandoned her husband,
The most excellent of all men,
And sailed to Troy!

1. Sappho refers to Helen in this poem. Who was Helen? [2]

PS

Poem 48
You came, just what I was looking for,
You soothed my soul which was
Burning with desire.

PS

Poem 102
Sweet mother!
I cannot weave my web,
I am smitten by a boy
Because of slender Aphrodite

PS

Poem 130
Love which loosens the limbs
Once again shakes me!
Bitter-sweet, invincible creature that he is.

2. How effectively does Sappho express the power of love in these fragments? [10]

1.5 Ovid

TOPIC OVERVIEW

- Learners should be able to identify and respond to the following:
  - purpose and intended audience of his poetry
  - the social and poetic context including the genre of the work
  - use of literary devices and choice of language
  - use of didactic style
  - use of themes and motifs
  - use of mythology
  - use of humour

Love and relationships in poetry

- In the work of Ovid (*Ars Amatoria* book 3) the representation of:
  - love and desire
  - men and women
  - sex
  - marriage
  - society and values
- Comparisons between the views in the literature and the thoughts put forward by Plato and Seneca, and societal ideas about men, women and marriage

The following prescribed source is covered in this topic:

- Ovid, *Ars Amatoria (The Art of Love)* book 3

Don't forget that you will be given credit in the exam if you study extra sources and make relevant use of them in your answers.

This topic focuses on the poetry of Ovid to discover the Roman elite's attitudes towards love. Ovid was born in Sulmo (modern-day Sulmona), Italy, to a father of the equestrian (**equites**) order. Early in his reign, Augustus marked out Ovid and his older brother (born exactly a year before Ovid, on 20 March 44 BC) as future senators. Neither brother was destined to take up this role, however: Ovid's brother died when he was only around twenty years old and Ovid chose the poetic life rather than the political one, much to his father's dismay.

equites a rank in the Roman class system which grew in wealth and status through occupations in commerce and finance

KEY INDIVIDUAL

Ovid

Date: 43 BC–AD 17/18

Poet

Publius Ovidius Naso (Ovid) was born in 43 BC, just one year after the assassination of Julius Caesar. He lived through politically turbulent times: a further five civil wars would occur before Ovid was twelve years old. Finally, in 31 BC, Augustus defeated Mark Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium. In 27 BC, when Ovid was sixteen, Augustus became the first Roman Emperor; peace had supposedly arrived.

S & C

Ovid's cognomen (the third name in a Roman's full name) actually means 'nosy', which started its life as a nickname (possibly for Ovid himself or an earlier member of his family) and then became part of his name. The English word 'nasal' comes from this Latin word; also consider English surnames such as 'Jolly' and 'Potter', which presumably arose from nicknames or job titles. Can you think of any others?

Ovid wrote poetry from around 25 BC (at eighteen years old) until his death in AD 17 or 18 and he moved to Rome around 28 BC (at the age of sixteen), if not before. He wrote often about Rome and the opportunities it afforded him. While at Rome, Ovid married three times; the first two of these marriages were short and it was his second marriage that gave him his only child, a daughter. The third marriage, however, was longer and probably lasted for the remainder of his life.

In AD 8 Ovid was exiled to Tomis (modern-day Constanța in Romania) by Emperor Augustus for, as Ovid himself says, 'a poem and a mistake' (*Tristia (The Mourning Poems)*, 2.207). The poem is often assumed to be *Ars Amatoria*, but Ovid's indiscretion has been the subject of many debates. Ovid's hints make it clear that the 'mistake' was a personal affront to Augustus, but was not so much as murder or treason. It is one of the mysteries of history.

Ovid spent his remaining years in exile, pining for his wife, his friends and, above all, Rome. He wrote letters to close friends and important people (including Augustus himself) begging them to aid him in returning to Rome and gaining a pardon for his mistake. However, a pardon was never granted, even after the death of Augustus in AD 14. Ovid died in Tomis, sad and alone (according to his own poetry), in AD 17 or 18.

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

John Thibault writes of the intrigue which is caused by Ovid's exile:

> Evidently, so long as the secret exists, the fascination it exerts will continue to encourage scholars to combine the available facts of history with the amorphous and cryptic allusions of Ovid to form a coherent answer to the enigma.

If you would like to find out more about some of the suggestions as to why Ovid was exiled, then the following book should provide an excellent place to start:

Thibault, J. C. (1964), *The Mystery of Ovid's Exile*, University of California Press.

Why do you think people feel the need to explain Ovid's exile? Do you think the real reason for his exile matters at all?

TIMELINE

44 BC	Assassination of Julius Caesar; birth of Ovid's brother
43 BC	Birth of Ovid
31 BC	Battle of Actium
c. 27 BC	Ovid's first marriage
24 BC	Ovid's brother dies
c. 24 BC	Ovid's first marriage ends in divorce; Ovid travels abroad
c. 22 BC	Ovid returns to Rome
18 BC	The Julian laws on marriage and adultery
c. 16–14 BC	Ovid's second marriage and birth of Ovid's daughter
c. 1 BC– AD 1	Ovid's father dies
?*c.* AD 2	Ovid's third marriage
AD 8	Ovid is exiled
AD 14	Augustus dies; Tiberius becomes emperor
AD 17/18	Ovid dies in exile

FIGURE 1.32
Statue of Ovid, Ettore Ferrie 1887 (Ovidiu Square, Constanța, Romania).

Purpose and intended audience of his poetry

Ovid published the *Ars Amatoria* between 2 BC and AD 2. The collection consists of three books and is often seen to go hand in hand with another **didactic** erotic poem, the *Remedia Amoris (The Cures for Love)*, published at a similar time. As the title of this collection suggests, Ovid is instructing his readers, his 'pupils', on the difficult topic of love. 'Love' is a controversial word and it is difficult to remove modern connotations of it from our reading of Ovid. For Ovid, love is not necessarily romantic, though there are lessons in romance in the *Ars Amatoria*; rather, love means the seduction of the person you desire and the physical acts which follow. Ovid's instructions certainly do not tell his pupils how to keep their lover after having sex (except to string them along); he stops once he has told them how to bed a lover and what to do in bed. For this reason, it is better to think of *Ars Amatoria* as *The Art of Seduction*, which reduces the confusion with the modern interpretations of the word 'love'.

PRESCRIBED SOURCE

Ars Amatoria (The Art of Love) book 3

Date: *c.* 2 BC– AD 2

Author: Ovid

Genre: Didactic poetry

Significance: The only poem Ovid explicitly wrote for women, which provides a fascinating insight into their lives and loves

Read it here: OCR source booklet CW

didactic poetry poetry which is intended to teach a lesson to its readers; instructional poetry (for more information, see p. 67)

DEBATE

The date of the third book of the *Ars Amatoria* has been suggested as being much later than that of the first and second books and the *Remedia Amoris*. The theory has a few different arguments, but the main one is Ovid's confession of the reasons for his exile: 'a poem and a mistake' (*Tristia*, 2.207). If the poem, as believed by many and seemingly attested by Ovid, is the *Ars Amatoria*, then there would have been a gap of at least six years between the publication of the poem and Ovid's exile for it. Therefore, some have suggested a date of AD 8 for the third book of the *Ars Amatoria* to coincide neatly with Ovid's exile.

S & C

How might you explain the gap between the publication of the *Ars Amatoria* (between 2 BC and AD 2) and Ovid's exile in AD 8? Consider Ovid's own words on his exile: 'a poem and a mistake' (*Tristia*, 2.207).

S & C

The Latin word *ars* gives us our English word 'art', but it is often better translated as 'skill'. The Latin word is equivalent to the Greek word *technē* which gives us our English word 'technique', which is another good translation of *ars*.

If 'love' in the context of Ovid's books is 'seduction', then how must 'art' be understood? To Ovid, love is a game to be played: the seduction of a lover is the ultimate prize. Therefore, if love is a game, it can be taught like any other. To become a master at a sport you need *ars* ('art' or 'skill'): to become a professional footballer, you must have the necessary skills; to become a professional cyclist, you must be skilled at cycling; why should it be any different with seduction? Ovid therefore presents his books as a manual of how to attain mastery at the game of love. What does this say about Ovid himself, his views on love and the audience for whom he is writing?

The first two books of the *Ars Amatoria* instruct men on how to seduce women; from the beginning of the third book, Ovid makes it clear that he is now instructing women:

PS

> I've given the Greeks arms, against Amazons: arms remain,
> to give to you Penthesilea, and your Amazon troop.
>
> lines 1–2

The Greeks are 'men' and the Amazons are 'women'. Therefore, in his first lines, Ovid references his previous books and sets the tone for his new one. The Amazons were a tribe of warrior women and Penthesilea was a famous queen of theirs who fought in the Trojan War. And so Ovid is aiding both sides of the war: first men and now women.

When Ovid directly addresses his readers, he always uses the term 'girls', which suggests that the women he is intending to teach are all young. Due to the attitudes of the time (see pp. 13–14), Ovid should only be talking to girls who are unmarried and of low social status:

PS

> But since, though you lack the marriage ribbons,
> it’s your concern to deceive your lovers …
>
> lines 483–484

Since Ovid is talking to infames, can he really expect them to be able to read his poem? Literacy rates in Rome were not high, and those from low-class families would most likely have very little training in reading Latin and, especially, Latin poetry. The atmosphere at the time of release of this book as well was not one in which women would have been encouraged to explore this guide to seduction (see p. 12). Does Ovid expect another audience beyond that of the young women he intends to instruct?

At several points, Ovid offers his addressees, the girls, as a source of humour for the reader. It is unusual to have an addressee as the butt of a joke in didactic poetry; after all, this undermines the relationship of teacher and pupil. Consider Ovid’s clear criticisms of the ‘pupils’ he is addressing in this poem:

PS

> The crowd come to be taught, girls pretty and plain:
> and always the greater part are not-so-good.
>
> lines 255–256

Ovid’s suggestion that the majority of the girls he teaches are ‘not-so-good’ is a tongue-in-cheek criticism aimed to make his pupils a laughing stock. This suggests that it is not simply those he addresses for whom he is writing.

As well as the jokes at the expense of the girls, he also mixes in advice which is of benefit to the men addressed in his previous two books. Consider the following lines:

PS

> O mortal girls go to the goddesses for your examples,
> and don’t deny your delights to loving men.
>
> lines 87–88

The suggestion that a woman should give in to a man’s lust seems to be more to the man’s advantage than the woman’s. This humour at the expense of the addressees and the clear advantages for men in these lines suggest that Ovid is writing not only for a female audience but also for an appreciative, eavesdropping male audience.

If Ovid is writing for a male audience as well as a female one, then this poem takes on a new flavour. The tone of the book changes and becomes more of a **parody** of didactic poetry and, almost, a joke at the expense of women. However, this does not mean that Ovid does not offer any serious advice to women in his poem. Just because he is writing with both a male and female audience in mind, this does not lessen the value of some of his teaching. After all, he does sometimes complain that he is creating problems for himself in teaching women the subtleties of love:

parody a piece of work which is intended to make fun of another work or a genre of work

PS

> no doubt I’ll be attacked with my own weapons.
>
> line 590

PS

> What am I talking of, madman? Why show a naked front
> to the enemy, and betray myself on my own evidence?
>
> lines 667–668

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

Roy Gibson comments with regard to the addressees sometimes being the butts of jokes:

> Of course, not all of the text makes fun of its addressees, and even some of those passages which do are using humour as an effective tool for reinforcing the message.

Can humour at the expense of the addressee ever be an effective tool for reinforcing the message? Humour in general can be an effective teaching tool, but do you think mockery can be?

Ovid claims to be undoing the good work he has done in the first two books, where he advised men on how to seduce women, by writing the third book and showing women how to seduce men. Or perhaps that is just what he would like his female audience to believe. How much has he really hindered himself and other men from seducing women?

Study question
Who do you think the true intended audience of this book of the *Ars Amatoria* is? Try to defend your answer with quotations and evidence from the text.

The social and poetic context including the genre of the work

Augustus ruled Rome as the first emperor from 27 BC to AD 14 and in that time there was a great boom in Latin poetry: Virgil, Horace, Propertius, Tibullus and, of course, Ovid himself were all writing in the Augustan age. Ovid moved in social circles with Propertius and even shared a patron with Tibullus, named Messalla Corvinus. With such a melting pot of poetic talent, the Augustan age was characterised by artistic exploration.

Augustus himself, however, was keen to emphasise moral values in his new empire and stop some of the corruption he believed had occurred. Of the poets mentioned, many wrote in support of Augustus: Horace composed poems praising the new emperor and Virgil's *Aeneid* was written as an epic in honour of Augustus. However, Ovid tended to go against the grain and push the boundaries of Augustus' moral ruling. The clear flaunting of Augustus' Julian laws (see p. 12) in Ovid's writing could well have contributed to his exile.

Roman poetry showcased a variety of different styles, or **genres**, and these were largely (though not entirely) linked to the metre of each poem. Ovid had started his poetic career by following in the footsteps of the Latin love elegists: his theme was sexual exploration and love. **Love elegy**, in fact, often took as its central theme forbidden love: the object of the poet's desire was unavailable, usually because she was married. The new moral legislation of Augustus obviously threw a spanner in the works for this tradition of poetry. However, Ovid seemed unconcerned with the new laws and kept to his theme of love, publishing three books of elegy and four didactic poems.

Didactic poetry has a very long tradition, stretching back to the archaic poet Hesiod's poem *Works and Days* (*c.* 8th/7th century BC). Didactic poems aim to teach their audience about some aspect of life. The themes can vary wildly: Hesiod's poem is about

genre a type or kind of artwork into which many can be grouped; consider film genres such as horror, comedy, drama, romance etc.

love elegy a style of Roman poetry concerned with the trials and tribulations of love; the poetry was sometimes wistful, sometimes erotic and sometimes rather taboo agriculture; Virgil wrote the *Georgics* also on farming; Lucretius wrote *On the Nature of Things* about philosophy and atomism; and Ovid wrote his *Ars Amatoria* on seduction. The traditional poetic metre for didactic poetry was **dactylic hexameters** and the books tended to be short (around 800 lines), although there could be multiple books in one poetic collection. Didactic poems also used mythology to provide examples to their audience to further illustrate their lessons. As might be expected, in didactic poetry there is a lot of reference to the reader in the second person (i.e. 'you') and a lot of instructions that the reader is expected to follow. Didactic poetry was not linked to any formal education, but was rather a constructed literary style of writing.

The purpose of didactic poetry was to take a lesson and present it in an interesting and innovative way. Poetry was considered a display of skill, and therefore to teach using poetry seemed like the ultimate form of instruction. Ancient critics do not seem to note a difference between didactic poetry and epic, presumably because the poems of the epic tradition, such as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, were seen to teach their audiences about morality. In fact, epic poetry shares similar characteristics with those just described: short books of around 800 lines, written in dactylic hexameters with mythical allusions to illustrate points. They only differ because they do not often directly address the reader and they take a myth as their central story.

dactylic hexameter an ancient poetic metre in which a line consists of six metrical feet of similar lengths; a poem written entirely in this metre is also referred to as a 'dactylic hexameter' poem

Use of didactic style

We have no other erotic didactic poetry from the ancient world: Ovid seems to have been the originator of the art form. However, there were ancient 'sex manuals' in prose (the most famous two of which were written by Philaenis (4th/3rd century BC) and Elephantis (1st century BC), two Greek women). As well as this, Roman New Comedy would usually consist of a scene in which an older female brothel owner would instruct her young disciple in the ways of love. Ovid therefore had literary precedents for his erotic didactic work.

EXPLORE FURTHER

Green, P. (1982), *Ovid: The Erotic Poems*, Penguin Classics. (If you have the time, read Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* books 1 and 2, the *Amores* and the *Remedia Amoris*; this will give you some context.)

However, despite the influences of the didactic and erotic traditions, Ovid does create something innovative and new in his *Ars Amatoria*. The poem itself is written in **elegiac couplets** rather than dactylic hexameters. Ovid's decision to write in this metre might

elegiac couplets an ancient poetic metre which consisted of two adjacent lines; the first is a line of dactylic hexameter, the second is a shorter pentameter line (with only five metrical feet), which tends to be indented when printed; this is the traditional metre of love elegy

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

Peter Toohey comments on the style of didactic poetry as follows:

> A didactic epic speaks with a single authorial voice and this is directed explicitly to an addressee, who may or may not be named. It is usually a serious literary form. Its subject matter is instructional, rather than merely hortatory. It may be, and often is, quite technical and detailed.

Based on Toohey's description, do you think Ovid is writing a serious didactic work or a parody of the genre?

S & C Why do you think Ovid chose to write his *Ars Amatoria* in elegiac couplets rather than dactylic hexameters? Make sure you support your theory with well-reasoned arguments.

Study question

What genres exist today in film, television and literature? How does the genre impact our expectations?

be an attempt to credit the Latin elegiac tradition to which he owes much; he could have wanted to create a new, genre-defying (and genre-defining) work; he could simply have preferred to write in elegiac couplets (although it is worth noting that his *Metamorphoses* (*The Transformations*) were written in dactylic hexameters). It could also be true that Ovid wanted to ensure that his fun, flirtatious didactic poems were clearly separated from the heavy, serious, weighty epics which dactylic hexameters clearly signified.

Use of literary devices and choice of language

Ovid provides clues as to how the *Ars Amatoria* book 3 should be split up. It is 812 lines long and consists of an introduction (lines 1–98), elementary instruction (lines 99–498), advanced instruction (lines 499–808) and an epilogue (lines 809–812). The reason we can split the book in this way is Ovid's use of sailing metaphors to mark out his sections:

PS

> But I'm blown about by greater gusts of wind,
> while we're in harbour, may you ride the gentle breeze.
>
> lines 99–100

PS

> If I might turn from lesser to greater things,
> and spread the full expanse of swelling sail …
>
> lines 499–500

Notice that in line 99 Ovid highlights that his pupils are in the harbour in the gentle breeze but that a greater wind has arrived in line 500: 'the full expanse of swelling sail'. Ovid and his pupils have left the safety of 'the harbour' and the elementary lessons and have set out on the much more dangerous open sea and the advanced instruction. Ovid uses a further sailing metaphor to point to the final, and rather rude, section of his teaching (see p. 79).

Ovid often uses metaphors throughout this poem to help the reader to imagine and understand difficult concepts by recasting them in familiar language and imagery. In fact, military and sailing metaphors are common features in all Ovid's poetry, as well as Latin poetry in general. Ovid's military metaphors will be discussed a little later (see pp. 72–73). However, as well as sailing and military metaphors, ones involving the natural world and industry are also common in Ovid. Consider the following metaphor:

PS

> Even if you're deceived, what do you lose? It's all intact:
> though a thousand use it, nothing's destroyed that way.
> Iron crumbles, stone's worn away with use:
> that part's sufficient, and escapes all fear of harm.
>
> lines 89–92

Ovid uses an industrial metaphor to illustrate his point: we all know that iron and stone are blunted with use, but Ovid reassures his readers that the vagina is not similarly affected. Notice also that Ovid avoids potentially taboo language by using the term 'that part' for female genitalia. His conscious vocabulary choice creates a sense of mischief, since he does not use the real term. The metaphor, along with this euphemism, adds to the humour of the situation, especially as Ovid is urging his pupils to take multiple lovers. Is this advice aimed for them or for the benefit of the men who will become their lovers?

Ovid also makes use of similes throughout his poem. A simile directly compares one thing with another, often to add humour. The following is an example:

> That one laughs stridently in a hateful manner,
> like a mangy ass braying at the shameful mill.
>
> lines 289–290

Ovid here is advising on the importance of a delicate laugh. He compares one girl's laugh with the sound an ass (a donkey) makes; his humour here underlines the important message of his lesson. No girl is going to want to sound like a donkey, and so they take his lesson more seriously because of this.

It is also very common in Latin poetry to use metonyms. A metonym is where a writer refers to the whole of something just by its part (e.g. using 'wheels' to refer to a car). In Latin poetry, gods' names are often also used as metonyms. In this way, referring to Venus might mean nothing more than 'love'; Mars might mean 'war'. How common metonyms are in the texts you read will depend on the translator, because some translators will choose to use the word meant rather than keep the metonym. However, these lines provide an example of Ovid's use of metonyms:

> It's more fitting, and it suits girls more, to drink:
> Bacchus you don't go badly with Venus's boy.
>
> lines 761–762

Ovid here is advising girls to drink wine rather than eat food because it is more dainty and therefore fitting. Notice that he addresses Bacchus, the Roman god of wine, and Venus' boy, Cupid. What Ovid means is that wine and lust go well together; however, he is using metonyms to refer to wine and lust. The purpose is to raise the grandeur of the poem, by referencing the gods, and to inject humour once again. The image of Bacchus and Cupid getting on well at a dinner party is intended to be amusing to Ovid's audience.

Litotes is a literary technique which is used to emphasise something through understatement. It is often constructed using a double negative. Consider this example:

> And not the least part of charm is in walking:
> it attracts men you don't know, or sends them running.
>
> lines 299–300

Line 299 uses a double negative to emphasise how important walking is: 'not the least part' means that walking is a *very important* part of charm. Therefore, Ovid is using understatement to drive home the importance of his lessons on walking. Line 300 then reiterates this point by claiming that walking can attract or repel men. Notice how the litotes of line 299 is contrasted with the hyperbole in line 300. Hyperbole is exaggeration for a certain effect: would the way a woman walks really send men running? This over-the-top statement adds to the humour of the lines, conjuring a ridiculous image of men fleeing because of a particularly terrible walk. Hyperbole is another very common feature of Ovid's style.

Consider the following lines, which contain a number of different literary techniques:

PS

> A few things shameful to mention, she must know how to call
> the throws at knucklebones, and your values, you rolled dice:
> sometimes throwing three, sometimes thinking, closely,
> how to advance craftily, how to challenge.
>
> lines 353–356

First, notice how Ovid addresses the 'rolled dice', referring to 'your values'. This is called an apostrophe, when the poet directly addresses something. Usually, an apostrophe will be to a person/god who is not present or an object. This technique is used to add variety to his writing style, but can also be used for humour. In these lines, there is a certain amount of humour from talking to inanimate objects, which personifies them.

Notice also in these lines that Ovid uses repetition at the beginning of successive clauses: 'sometimes … sometimes … how to … how to'. Repetition is a very common way to emphasise or contrast ideas. Here, the repetition of 'sometimes' contrasts the two things that a girl should do when she is playing dice games: throwing and thinking. The fact that these words are repeated at the beginning of their clauses also means that they are examples of anaphora: repetition at the beginning of successive clauses. The anaphora of 'how to … how to …' brings out the parallelism of the clauses as Ovid instructs his pupils on what they must think: how can they advance and how can they challenge?

ACTIVITY

Read through the *Ars Amatoria* book 3 and find some more examples of:

- Metaphors
- Interesting vocabulary choices
- Similes
- Metonyms
- Litotes
- Hyperbole
- Apostrophe
- Repetition/anaphora
- Parallelism
- Contrast

When you find them, make a note and consider why Ovid has used this particular literary device? What is its purpose? Has he used it for humour or to underline his message/lesson? Could he have said it in a different way? If so, why do you think he has chosen this way?

Remember that poetic and sound effects (such as enjambment or alliteration) will be translator specific, and different translators might not use the same sound effects. It is best to avoid such analysis if possible.

EXAM TIP

It is important to remember to explain why an author is using particular literary devices when writing your answers in examinations. It is not enough simply to state that Ovid uses a metaphor; your answer should include discussion of why he uses it and how it is effective.

Ovid is also very cleverly using the dice game as a metaphor for the game of love: girls need to know how to play and how to win.

Use of themes and motifs

There are many themes and motifs to think about in the *Ars Amatoria* book 3. The following are only a small selection.

The role of Venus

Venus is the Roman goddess of love and beauty. Ovid uses her in this poem as his reason for the venture:

> You still might lack [the art of love] now: but, before my eyes,
> stood Venus herself, and ordered me to teach you.
>
> lines 43–44

PS

Ovid claims a divine order for his book; but he does not necessarily suggest divine inspiration: the words come from him. Venus claims that Ovid has armed men in this dangerous game of love, but he has left women defenceless:

> Two books of their tricks have been composed:
> let this lot too be instructed by your warnings.
>
> lines 47–48

PS

The role of Venus is therefore to commission Ovid's work. Why would Ovid need to claim divine commission? Consider these lines:

> Someone will say: 'Why add venom to the snake,
> and betray the sheepfold to the rabid she-wolf?'
>
> lines 7–8

PS

Clearly there is an imagined male objector to Ovid's latest literary project: he compares women with snakes and a she-wolf; men to a sheepfold. The metaphor paints women as dangerous and predatory, which means that Ovid is giving extra powers to these predators. So Ovid needs to defend himself. At first he defends himself by retorting:

> Beware of loading the crime of the many onto the few:
> let the merits of each separate girl be seen.
>
> lines 9–10

PS

S & C

Ancient poetry often started with an invocation (when you call on someone) to a divine being. In the prescribed source, this is Venus. Compare Ovid's invocation here with the following ancient poems to see how they differ:

Homer's *Iliad* book 1 (lines 1–7) and *Odyssey* book 1 (lines 1–10)
Virgil's *Aeneid* book 1 (lines 1–11)
Ovid's *Amores* book 1, poem 1

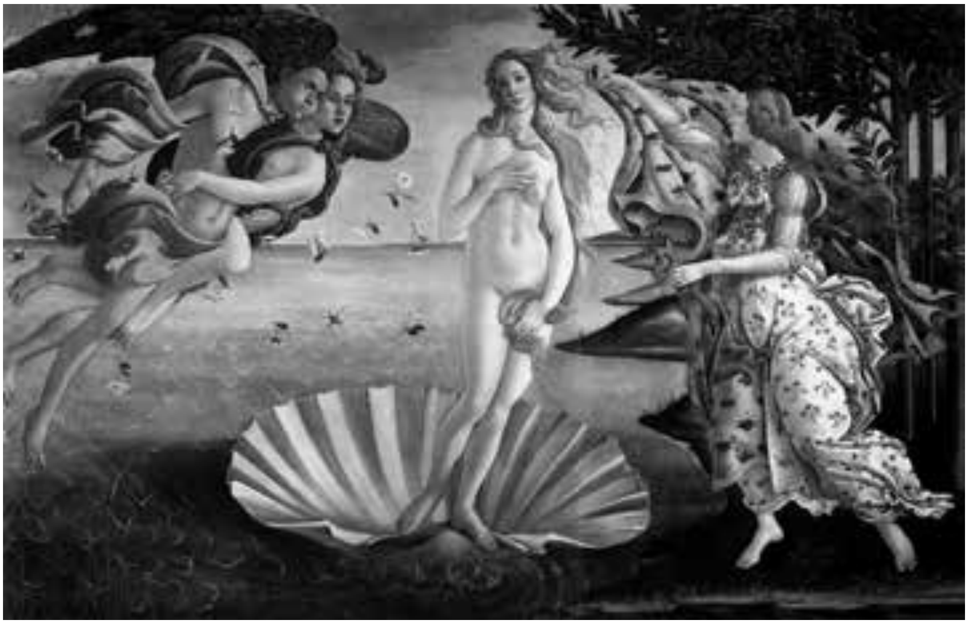


FIGURE 1.33
'If Apelles of Cos had never sculpted Venus,/she'd be hidden, sunk beneath the waters' (PS lines 401–402).

Birth of Venus, Sandro Botticelli *c.* 1480 (Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy).

ACTIVITY

Read through the *Ars Amatoria* book 3 again and take a note of where else Venus appears. What is her purpose in the lines you have found? Why do you think Ovid has mentioned her in that particular context?

Ovid admits the predatory nature of some women, but claims that not all of them are the same. Does this successfully answer the objection? Even if it does not, Ovid has an ace up his sleeve: the divine commission from Venus. With the patronage of Venus, Ovid feels free to educate women in the techniques of seduction without fear of recrimination from angry men.

Love and war

Ovid is very fond of pairing love and war. The very opening of the poem refers immediately to warfare (lines 1–6), claiming that it is only fair that men and women 'Go equal to the fight' (PS line 3) and that it was unfair 'for armed men to battle with naked girls' (PS line 5). In fact, Ovid goes on to say that a victory of this kind, against unarmed opponents, 'would be shameful, men' (PS line 6). Ovid is mixing the theme of seduction up with the theme of warfare expertly here; he reproaches men for wanting an easy victory. It is a challenge, a game, that Ovid wants to play. Thus games, war and love are all inextricably tangled within the first six lines of the poem.

This also comes full circle in the last lines of the poem: Ovid cannot help himself from ending with another military metaphor:

PS

> As once the boys, so now my crowd of girls
> inscribe on your trophies 'Ovid was my master'.
>
> lines 811–812

The ring composition completes the motif of military metaphors, which has been sprinkled throughout the poem (e.g. lines 590, 667 and 672). The 'trophies' Ovid refers to are the spoils taken from fallen enemies in warfare or, in this context, the pleasures gained at the successful seduction of a lover. In fact, the last two lines of the *Ars Amatoria* book 3 are very close to the closing of book 2:

> But whoever overcomes his Amazon with my weapon,
> He can inscribe on his trophies: 'Ovid was my master'.
>
> Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* book 2 lines 743–744

Both men and women have benefitted by Ovid's military teaching and both have gained spoils which they can dedicate to their professor.

However, if the ultimate aim of Ovid's poems is to allow men to seduce women and women to seduce men, then there is no real warfare. Both sides are fighting for the same goal. Perhaps this is Ovid's game all along. Or perhaps it is actually Ovid who is the ultimate victor. He has the spoils of both men and women dedicated to him; also notice the change in the second line of the *Ars Amatoria* book 3 and the penultimate line: 'you Penthesilea, and your Amazon troop' and 'my crowd of girls'. The women have switched their allegiance from Penthesilea, an Amazonian queen, to Ovid and his masterful teaching. How much is this manual of seduction merely a weapon of Ovid's?

S & C

Love and war are a common theme in Roman love elegy. Read Ovid's collection of poems, the *Amores*, to see further examples of love and war combined. Are there other ancient authors you have read which combine these two themes?

Are there any modern contexts which you can think of linking the idea of love and war? Why do you think these two ideas are so often combined?

Youth versus old age

Ovid paints a vivid picture of youth and the joys that are to be had when a woman is young. Conversely, he suggests that old age for a woman is the end of her sexual life and the end of her joys:

> Be mindful first that old age will come to you:
> so don't be timid and waste any of your time.
>
> Book 3, lines 59–60

Ovid creates an image of the threat of old age hanging over every young woman and he urges her to ensure that she spends her youth wisely, which of course, for Ovid, is seducing men.

The desolation which he envisions for older women is particularly vivid and, in some ways, pathetic:

> There'll be a time when you, who now shut out your lover,
> will lie alone, and aged, in the cold of night,
> nor find your entrance damaged by some nocturnal quarrel,
> nor your threshold sprinkled with roses at dawn.
>
> lines 69–72

Ovid here is pitying (and also mocking) his pupils for their loss of youth, which he claims is inevitable. There is a lot of imagery of life disappearing which Ovid uses in these lines about old age and youth. Ovid's advice is to live life to the full while you can:

> un-aided our beauties flee: pluck the flower,
> which, if not plucked, will of itself, shamefully, fall.
>
> lines 79–80

Ovid here is using the argument of old age to convince his pupils that they must search for lovers while they are young to avoid the inevitable lack of love in the future. It is, perhaps, supposed to be humorous as well as convincing.

However, he later returns to his motif of youth versus old age to sing the praises of the older man. In a lesson on how to benefit from different sorts of lovers, Ovid mentions that old lovers are, quite possibly, the better sort of lovers whom a woman can string along and play with without fear of losing them:

PS

> Your older warrior loves sensibly and wisely,
> suffers much that the beginner won't endure:
>
> lines 565–566

Study question
How does the imagery in lines 79–80 produce a vivid picture of life passing by and the dangers of old age?

The clear benefits of an older man are at odds with the earlier references to the disadvantages of old age, which were, of course, addressed to women. How sexist is this portrayal of older men and women? Ovid imagines that women are past their prime in old age, whereas men have only just reached theirs. It is worth noting that by the date of publication of the *Ars Amatoria*, Ovid is into his forties and becoming a bit of an 'older warrior' himself. Perhaps the teacher's suggestion of seeking an older lover is not as unbiased as might at first be assumed.

S & C How are the dangers of old age different for men and women, in both Roman times and our own? How are older men and women treated and represented differently in ancient and modern societies?

Catalogues

Ovid uses catalogues to teach his pupils quickly about the variation available to them. The most prominent didactic catalogues are of hairstyles (lines 135–154), shades of clothing (lines 169–192) and sexual positions (lines 771–788). The catalogues are used to inject some fun into the instruction and to show off the knowledge of Ovid as a teacher of women: he has a wide-ranging knowledge of all these things. Therefore, the readers can trust him as an instructor. The lists hardly ever become tedious because of Ovid's constant littering of mythical allusions and humour, as well as the variation in the styles themselves. Compare the following lines:

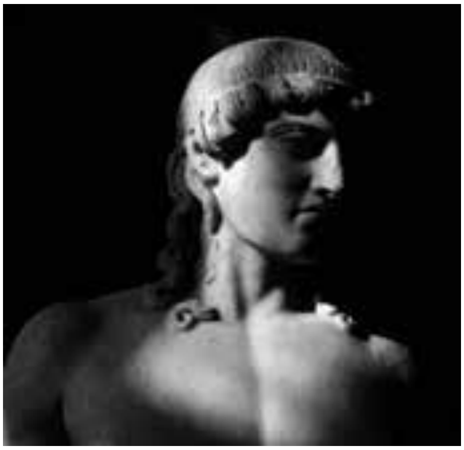


FIGURE 1.34
Apollo of Mantua, Roman copy of Greek original *c.* 5th century BC (Louvre, Paris, France).

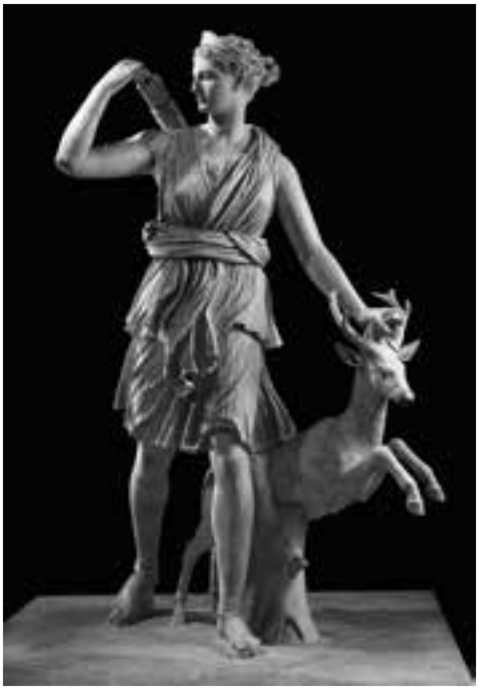


FIGURE 1.35
Diana of Versailles, Roman copy of Greek original *c.* 325 BC (Louvre, Paris, France).

One girl should throw her hair over both shoulders:
like Phoebus when he takes up the lyre to sing.
Another tied up behind, in Diana’s usual style,
when, skirts tucked up, she seeks the frightened quarry.

lines 141–144

And tangled hair suits many girls: often you’d think
it’s been hanging loose since yesterday: it’s just combed.

lines 153–154

What to say about dress? Don’t ask for brocade,
or wools dyed purple with Tyrian murex.
With so many cheaper colours having appeared,
it’s crazy to bear your fortune on your back!

lines 169–172

White suits the dark: you looked pleasing, Andromeda, in white:

line 191

Milanion bore Atalanta’s legs on his shoulders:
if they’re good looking, that mode’s acceptable.
Let the small be carried by a horse: Andromache,
his Theban bride, was too tall to straddle Hector’s horse.

lines 775–778

You too, whom Lucina’s marked with childbirth’s wrinkles,
like the swift child of Parthia, turn your mount around.

lines 785–786

The mythical allusions Ovid makes serve to heighten the register of his poetry while also setting the audience in a familiar scene. The favourable comparisons to Phoebus (Apollo) and his twin sister, Diana, show that whichever hairstyle a girl might pick, she will look divine regardless. The mention of white clothing bringing out the beauty of the Ethiopian Andromeda, who captured the attention of Perseus, creates a positive mythical example for darker girls. Finally, the use of famous mythological heroines in his advice on sexual positions creates humour at the expense of these characters: Atalanta, famous for her strong hunter’s legs, is amusingly shown to be showing them off during sex; Andromache, the perfect, but tall, wife from Homer’s *Iliad*, suddenly becomes a sexual figure whose height would be overemphasised if she straddled Hector like a horse-rider.

Notice the other instances of humour and the vivid picture Ovid presents: he undermines his entire list of hairstyles by suggesting that ‘tangled hair’ actually suits some girls; then he once again reverses this by claiming that a lot of work goes into this look. Ovid mocks expensive garments and trimmings in lines 169–172, claiming that purple is too expensive. The irony that Roman senators wore purple would not have escaped Ovid. For a woman, to wear purple and gold was considered overly luxurious, but not so for a

Study question
Research the following figures of mythology and consider why Ovid uses them in his catalogue and how they are relevant.

Women who have wronged their husbands: Helen (lines 11–12), Clytemnestra (lines 11–12), Eriphyle (lines 13–14)

Women who are renowned for their love of their husbands: Laodamia (lines 17–18), Alcestis (lines 19–20), Evadne (lines 21–22)

Women who have been wronged by men: Ariadne (lines 33–34), Phyllis (lines 37–38 and 459–460)

senator. Finally, Ovid has advice for women who have had children and may have stretch marks: reverse the straddling position so that only your back may be seen. This position is popular in Roman artwork and Ovid wittily links this act to the Parthians, who were famous for facing backwards in their saddles to shoot arrows behind them as they fled from battle. The military metaphor, at the expense of a Roman enemy, is meant to create amusement during a tongue-in-cheek catalogue of sexual positions.

In all these catalogues, Ovid is sure to emphasise the fact that, actually, it is all a matter of individual style:

PS

> There isn’t only one style: choose what suits each one,
> and consult your mirror in advance.

lines 135–136

See also lines 187–188 and 771–772, where Ovid again states that choice is important. There is a reassurance here that every girl will suit some sort of style and, in each of these catalogues, it is individual taste which wins out in the end.

Use of mythology

Ovid makes many mythological allusions throughout his poem, such as those we have already seen to Andromache, Andromeda and the Roman gods. He assumes a good knowledge of the Greek and Roman myths, and therefore provides evidence for his lessons from these universal stories. The most densely packed mythological lines are the catalogue of mythological figures (lines 1–42) and the didactic story of Cephalus and Procris (lines 683–746). The opening lines of the poem set up the mythological foundations of Ovid’s work. He talks of heroines who have caused ill to their husbands (lines 11–14), heroines who are renowned for their love for their husbands (lines 15–22) and women who have been wronged by men (lines 33–40). The allusions come thick and fast in these lines and it would be impossible to refer to them all here. Of the numerous mythical characters Ovid mentions, this section will focus on only a handful.

Ovid uses Medea as an example of a woman wronged by her husband (lines 33–34), Jason, who left her for another woman. However, Medea is usually not painted as a

EXPLORE FURTHER

Read Euripides' *Medea* in Philip Vellacott's translation to see how she was portrayed in Greek times. It is interesting that Euripides at times does present her in a sympathetic light before finally revealing her dreadful crime.

Vellacott, P. (1963), *Euripides: Medea and other plays*, Penguin Classics.

If you want another interpretation of women in myth, read Ovid's *Heroides*, which are letters to heroes from mythical heroines. Of particular interest for this topic are *Heroides* 1 (Penelope to Odysseus), 7 (Dido to Aeneas) and 12 (Medea to Jason).

Isbell, H. (1990), *Ovid: Heroides*, Penguin Classics.

victim of a cruel husband, but as a bitter woman obsessed with revenge. According to the tradition, Medea gained her revenge on Jason by murdering his new bride and her father as well as Jason and Medea's own children. Ovid has purposefully omitted her acts of murder from his version of the myth. Why might he have done this? (Ovid wrote a play (which is now lost), the *Medea*, about this very myth.)

Ovid talks of Aeneas' betrayal of Dido as an example of men wronging women (lines 39–40). This story forms one of the most celebrated books of Virgil's Roman epic, the *Aeneid*. Book 4 presents Dido's love for Aeneas and his, at first, seemingly mutual affection before he is summoned by the gods to leave. Dido then commits suicide out of sorrow and shame. Ovid would have been well aware of the *Aeneid*; he mentions it ('and [recite] Aeneas the wanderer, the beginnings of mighty Rome,/than which there is no better known work in Latin' (PS lines 337–338)) and even references it in his very first line (Ovid's poem starts with 'weapons' as does Virgil's *Aeneid*). The reference is therefore inviting comparison with Virgil and informing Ovid's audience that he will teach them how to avoid such ill-treatment, no matter how 'pious' and grand the man who commits it.

Ovid's use of Penelope (lines 15–16), and other such faithful women, is interesting because she is often seen as the model of perfection for wives in the ancient world: a woman who is constant and faithful to her husband, despite her opportunities to remarry during his long absence. She is a similar figure to Andromache, the wife of Hector, who stands atop the walls of Troy to watch her husband fight, longing for his safe return. It is significant that Ovid later uses Andromache to emphasise how boring the unhappy women of myth are:

> I'd never ask you, Andromache, or you, Tecmessa
> while there's another lover for me than you.
> I find it hard to believe, though I'm forced to by your children,
> that you ever slept with your husbands.
>
> lines 519–522

PS

Tecmessa was the captured concubine of the Greater Ajax in the Trojan War. Ovid's reversal of the traditional 'good bride' to one of boring prudence is part of his impressive ability to shock his audience. He also leaves out the fact that Andromache and Tecmessa have no reason to be anything but unhappy: Andromache's husband, Hector, and her son, Astyanax, are killed and she is taken into slavery; and Tecmessa's master, now husband and father of her son, commits suicide in disgrace. Ovid is unconcerned with this: the fact remains that they are not fun enough for him.

The myth of Cephalus and Procris is used as a warning against becoming too jealous of a husband and putting too much faith in the tales of others. Due to a misunderstanding, Procris believes that her husband, Cephalus, is having an affair with a woman named Aura. In actuality, Aura is simply the name of the breeze which Cephalus is hoping will cool him down after a hunt. Procris is so suspicious that she spies on her husband in the forest; when she realises her mistake, she rushes out happily to embrace her husband and he, mistaking her for an animal in the bushes, strikes her with his spear. The purpose of this myth, claims Ovid, is to teach his readers about the dangers of jealousy. However, the beauty of the language involved and the length of the allusion suggest that Ovid is also letting the full force of his poetic skill loose here:

PS

She called out: 'Ah me! You've pierced a loving heart.
That part always takes its wound from Cephalus.
I die before my time, but not wounded by a rival:
that will ensure you, earth, lie lightly on me.'

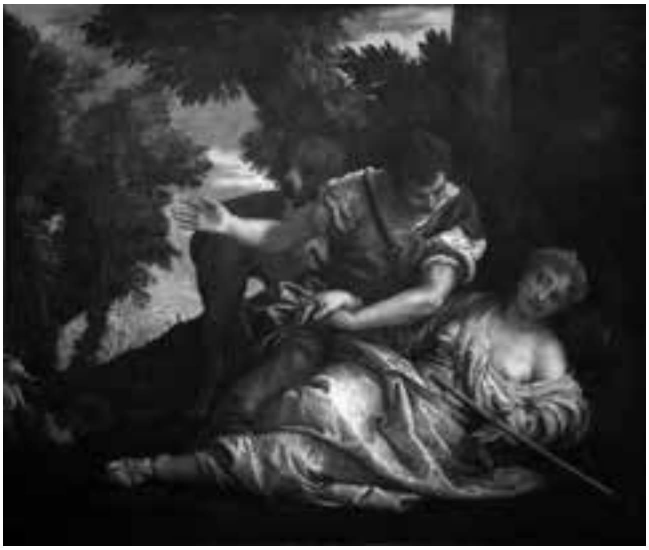
lines 737–740

PS

He held the body of his dying lady on his sad breast,
and bathed the cruel wound with his tears.
She died, and her breath, passing little by little
from her rash breast, was caught on her sad lover's lips.

lines 743–746

FIGURE 1.36
Cephalus and Procris, Paolo Veronese 1580 (Luxembourg Museum, Paris, France).



The lesson for the audience comes from the beauty of the lines and the pity felt for Procris and Cephalus. Notice Ovid's use of 'rash' to describe Procris, referring to her quick conclusion that her husband was having an affair. There is also a finality and sad irony that Cephalus can no longer kiss his Procris, but can only use his lips to catch her last breath. The tragic story is completed with these lines; notice how Ovid quickly changes the tone back to the witty, comedic manual of seduction he has been working on:

> But to resume the work: bare facts for me
> so that my weary vessel can reach harbour.
>
> lines 747–748

PS

The story of Cephalus and Procris, though seemingly presenting a lesson, is marked by Ovid as no more than a digression from his 'serious' task; and he cannot help but make a pun ('bare') considering what he is going to begin talking about in 23 lines (the sexual catalogue).

Use of humour

Ovid's subject matter is supposed to supply a large amount of humour in itself. Considering the political climate in which he was writing and the brashness with which he presents his lessons on seduction, the humour of the text stands out. There is, no doubt, also a certain hope that the taboo nature of some of the poem, given Augustus' legislation, will amuse the audience. Instances of humour have been mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, but it is important to notice Ovid's general humorous and fun style of writing.

Ovid is also fond of puns and wordplay. Sometimes it is difficult to reproduce Latin puns in English because the languages are very different, even though they are related.

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

Peter Green comments on this final use of sailing metaphor to mark out the sections of Ovid's work:

> Here, not surprisingly – since it forms a prelude to specifically sexual instruction, 769ff. – we find an obvious double entendre. The 'bare facts of the case' […] are, in every sense, 'naked matters': indeed at this stage we may, if we will, see the entire recurrent metaphor [of sailing] in sexual terms (boat = penis, harbour = vagina).

Do you think Green is reading too much into the boat metaphor? Reread the various sections which are introduced by sailing metaphors and consider whether this really could be representing some sort of sexual intercourse.

However, sometimes they are more universal (consider line 747 on the previous page). The following example shows how, in English, we cannot present a good play on words that mirrors the Latin puns:

> She spoke, and she gave me a leaf, and a few myrtle
> berries (since her hair was crowned with myrtle).

lines 53–54

This pun is untranslatable in English and relies on a pun on the myrtle plant. We get our English word for myrtle from the Latin word *myrtum* and the Greek word *myrton*. In Greek, the word *myrton* is also a euphemism for female genitalia. This brings to light Ovid's intended pun: notice the way he delays his explanation of what gift Venus is giving from the myrtle until the second line, therefore inviting misinterpretation. It is probably to continue this comic effect that he adds in the parentheses explaining that Venus had her hair bound in myrtle. Ovid is yet again adding a shock factor to his poem by engaging in suggestive flirtation with a goddess.

ACTIVITY

Read the *Ars Amatoria* book 3 and look for other instances of plays on words and humour. Notice particularly lines 23–24, which talk about the goddess Virtue ('Virtus') being female: virtus is the ideal quality of a man in Roman times (see p. 7).

IN THE WORK OF OVID THE REPRESENTATION OF

Love and desire

Love is a game to Ovid; it is a skill which can be taught. This whole poem is about the ways in which a woman can arm herself against a man. He notes the following about women in myth who have been wronged:

> What destroyed you all, I ask? Not knowing how to love:
> your art was lacking: love lasts long through art.

lines 41–42

The 'art', of course, is taught through Ovid's didactic poem. The important thing in love is to know how to play the game to the best advantage. Even Venus, the goddess and representation of love, refers to it as warfare:

> She said to me, then: 'What have the poor girls done,
> an unarmed crowd betrayed to well-armed men?'

lines 45–46

This constant representation of love as a contest is supposed to ensure that both sides strive their hardest to win. In some ways, this is of benefit to all.

Ovid represents desire as an important part of love. It is a useful way to string men along:

> [A bare shoulder] suits you pale-skinned girls especially: when I see it,
> I want to kiss your shoulder, as far as it's shown.

lines 309–310

Notice how Ovid enters his own narrative and reveals his personal desires to kiss a naked shoulder. This shows just how important desire is as a weapon in the war of love.

Men and women

Men and women, as represented by Ovid, are at war. Ovid laments the fact that because of his divine commission, he is betraying men to women:

> Let all be betrayed: I've unbarred the gates to the enemy:
> and let my loyalty be to treacherous betrayal.
>
> lines 577–578

Despite this claim, it is necessary to consider whether Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* book 3 is misogynistic, considering all that has been discussed. He says that he is teaching women, but in fact presents lessons of benefit to men. The possibility of a secondary audience of young men has been put forward (p. 65). Consider also Ovid's comments on old age for men and for women (pp. 73–74). In actuality, Ovid talks to his girls, the pupils of his teachings, as something similar to prostitutes on many occasions. He references the gifts which they might receive from their lovers, similar, perhaps, to taking money in exchange for sex. He claims:

> Nor does my voice say sell it […]
>
> line 97

Clearly Ovid does not want his girls to think that he is prostituting them. However, given some of his advice, it is difficult to believe his disclaimer. Therefore, Ovid's representation of women can be seen as misogynistic.

PS

ACTIVITY

Cupid is the god of desire. Look for references to him (he is often called 'Venus' boy') and work out whether Ovid is talking about the strong pull of desire and lust.

PS

Study question

Do you think that Ovid is misogynistic? Make sure that you evidence your answer with references to *Ars Amatoria* book 3.

Sex

The most comprehensive representation of sex in this poem is the catalogue of sexual positions (see pp. 74–76). However, there are some interesting points to note in Ovid's representation of the climax of sexual activities:

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

Amy Richlin has said of Ovid's poems:

> Their combination of stylistic brilliance with violent content, especially violence against women, I find fascinating but repellent.

Do you agree with Richlin that Ovid's attitude towards women is 'fascinating but repellent'? Perhaps you would argue that it is one or the other. What evidence can you find in the *Ars Amatoria* book 3 to support or challenge Richlin's interpretation?

> Woman, feel love, melted to your very bones,
> and let both delight equally in the thing.

lines 793–794

The act of sex is a pleasurable experience for the man and the woman. Ovid condones equal pleasure, as is only to be expected in a book about how women should seduce men: if there were no pleasure involved for women, what would be the purpose? However, in a typically Ovidian style, he reverts to a rather unflattering comment for the girls he is supposedly instructing:

> She who asks fondly for a gift after love's delights,
> can't want her request to carry any weight.
> Don't let light into the room through all the windows:
> it's fitting for much of your body to be concealed.

lines 805–808

This bathetic end to his sexual instruction shows the playful, and juvenile, attitude with which Ovid treats sex: his serious teaching is undermined by his offensive joke at his pupils' expense. He suggests that the girls will want payment for their favours and that they are better left unseen. This links closely with the idea of misogyny discussed above (p. 81).

Marriage

Augustus' moral legislation was strict on the issue of sex outside marriage: adultery could only be committed with infames. It is for this reason that Ovid puts a 'disclaimer' early in this poem to ensure that the moralist regime of Augustus was satisfied:

> While wit works, seek your orders here girls,
> those that modesty, principles and your rules allow.

lines 57–58

The mention of 'principles' (usually translated better as 'laws') suggests a reference to the Julian laws on marriage. However, Ovid cannot resist the Roman elegiac tradition and he includes a whole lesson on avoiding a husband and the protections he might have put in place:

> I nearly forgot the skilful ways by which you can
> elude a husband, or a vigilant guardian.
> Let the bride fear her husband: to guard a wife is right:
> it's fitting, it's decreed by law, the courts, and modesty.
> But for you to be guarded, scarcely released from prison,
> who could bear it? Adhere to my religion, and deceive!

lines 611–616

He is careful to inform us that his advice is not intended for high-status married women, who should be well guarded by their husbands since this is what the 'law' requires. However, he is still going to tell women how to avoid the protection put in place by their men; this is ostensibly just for the freedwomen, who, it seems, were exempt from the Julian law on the restraining of adultery. As Ovid well knows, there is no way to stop a married woman from reading and using this advice; indeed, upper-class married women are far more likely to have been literate and wealthy enough to afford and read the poem, or to attend events at which it was recited. Therefore, possibly it was Ovid's intention to give some covert advice to the married, respectable women on how to get away from their husbands and do some seduction of their own. With Ovid's flouting of the rules, it is easy to see why this poem may have contributed to his exile.

EXAM TIP

Spending a little time planning your answer will always save you time when you begin to write. Writing a plan will usually encourage you to produce a more coherent argument which is directed at the title. It can also help the examiner to reward your work if you do not finish your essay.

Society and values

Ovid's constant playing with the ideas of adultery and seduction was most certainly against the values of the time, at least of the establishment. The mockery of the status quo and the playful disclaimers show a poet who is unafraid of the government and keen to be a bad influence or, at least, a daring voice. It is probably the case that Ovid thought this right up until his exile, when this opinion was probably rather swiftly changed.

Ovid's descriptions of Rome (lines 381–404) also present a wonderful image of the places where women and men spent their time. It is clear that women were not allowed to partake in sport or go to the Campus Martius, but he tells them:

> But it's fine to be seen out walking in the shade of Pompey's
> Porch when your head's on fire with Virgo's heavenly horses:
> visit the holy Palatine of laurel-wreathed Phoebus:
> he sank Cleopatra's galleys in the deep:
> the arcades Livia, Caesar's wife, and his sister, Octavia, started,
> and his son-in-law Agrippa's, crowned with naval honours:
>
> lines 387–392

It is amusing to think of how Augustus Caesar would have felt about his palace (the Palatine) and the monuments of his sister, wife and son-in-law being used as a hunting ground for lusty seducers. Once again, Ovid is skating on very thin ice.

TOPIC REVIEW

These questions should draw on your knowledge of the whole topic, so think carefully about the different things you have learned (check the Topic Overview on p. 61).

1. At whom was Ovid's poetry aimed?
2. What does Ovid's poem say about love and desire?
3. How has Ovid rebelled against his contemporary government?
4. Is Ovid's poem just humorous or is there a serious underlying message?
5. What does Ovid's poem tell us about men and women in Rome and the ancient attitudes towards them?

EXAM TIP

Take care to answer the question which has been set: spend some time thinking about what the question is asking. You must beware of the temptation to rewrite an essay which you have done in class as this may not be strictly relevant. You must be prepared to respond to the question and be selective about the information which you include.

Further Reading

Gibson, R. (2003), *Ovid: Ars Amatoria* Book 3, Cambridge University Press.
Green, P. (1982), *Ovid: The Erotic Poems* (Introduction), Penguin Classics.
Thibault, J. C. (1964), *The Mystery of Ovid's Exile*, University of California Press.
Toohey, P. (1996), *Epic Lessons: An Introduction to Ancient Didactic Poetry*, Routledge.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Source A: Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* book 3, lines 579–598

What's easily given nourishes love poorly:
mingle the odd rejection with welcome fun.
Let him lie before the door, crying: 'Cruel entrance!'
pleading very humbly, threatening a lot too.
We can't stand sweetness: bitterness renews our taste:
often a yacht sinks swamped by a favourable wind:
this is what bitter wives can't endure:
their husbands can come to them when they wish:
add a closed door and a hard-mouthed janitor,
saying: 'You can't,' and love will touch you too.
Drop the blunted foils now: fight with blades:
no doubt I'll be attacked with my own weapons.
Also when the lover you've just caught falls into the net,
let him think that only he has access to your room.
Later let him sense a rival, the bed's shared pact:
remove these arts, and love grows old.
The horse runs swiftly from the starting gate,
when he has others to pass, and others follow.
Wrongs relight the dying fires, as you wish:
See (I confess!), I don't love unless I'm hurt.

1. '… often a yacht sinks swamped by a favourable wind … The horse runs swiftly from the starting gate, when he has others to pass, and others to follow.' Of which literary device are these two sentences examples? [1]
2. 'Ovid is mocking his pupils rather than teaching them.' To what extent do you agree with this statement? You may use this passage as a starting point and should justify your response. [20]

Table of Comparisons

Comparisons between the views in the literature and the thoughts put forward by Plato and Seneca, and societal ideas about men, women and marriage

	Greek thoughts	**Roman thoughts**	**Plato**	**Seneca**	**Sappho**	**Ovid**
Men and women	Men should contribute to the state politically and on the battlefield. Women should run successful households and bear children.	Men have a duty to the state in politics and warfare. Women should run the households. Men and women can own property and run businesses.	Men should seek after truth. Men should serve the state by exhibiting self-control. It is important that women are controlled.	The wise man should avoid the pleasures of the body and focus on the needs of the soul. Humanity is one community, so the same is true for women.	Men occasionally feature as figures of fun in Sappho's poetry. Women are celebrated as independent but also changeable.	Men and women are in a battle to seduce one another. Both men and women must arm themselves in the battle of the sexes.
Marriage	Marriage is a very important institution for the state as it guaranteed the parentage of children. Marriage was a political arrangement between the families of the bride and groom.	Marriage is an extremely important part of citizenship and the state. It is used for political influence and to produce children.	In Plato's *Republic* (449a–466e), Socrates proposes a radical restructuring of marriage and the family.	An ideal marriage is a bond of 'pure love', similar to friendship. A husband and wife should love each other with no thought of advantage.	Marriages in Sappho are a cause of both celebration and regret as the girl passes from girlhood to adulthood.	Marriage is something to be avoided. If a woman has the misfortune to be married, there are plenty of ways round that!
Sex	Sex within marriage is important for procreation. Women were expected to be virgins when they married. Men could have a number of sexual relationships.	Adultery is illegal, though men can have sexual relations with infames and slaves. A woman should only have sex with her husband. Sex is important for procreation.	Sex is pleasurable and useful to society as children are produced.	Sex is the ultimate indulgence of lust. It is necessary only to continue the human race. It should be avoided in all other instances, as it is ruinous to the soul.	Sex relieves the pains of desire. Sappho describes sex using natural metaphors.	Sex is the ultimate goal of the game of love. It is fun, frivolous and to be sought at all costs. Sex does not need all the rules imposed on it. Sex is purely recreational.

	Greek thoughts	**Roman thoughts**	**Plato**	**Seneca**	**Sappho**	**Ovid**
Love	Although marriages were arranged, there is evidence for love between married couples.	Marriages are arranged, but love can develop between a man and wife. Further marriages (after the first arranged marriage) may well be for love.	In *Symposium*, love is described by Diotima as the search for goodness.	Love is similar to friendship. It is sought with no thought of advantage for oneself, but rather for the advantage of the beloved.	Sappho writes about both the pain and delight of love.	Love is a skill that can be taught. Once you have learnt the skill of love, then you can win the battle of the sexes and indulge all your pleasures.
Desire	There were many examples in Greek mythology of the destructive power of overweening desire or passion.	A Roman man's desire is related to his role as the dominant sexual partner. His desire needs to be controlled and appropriate, but it is an expression of his power.	Desire should be understood and resisted. Physical desire is less honourable than intellectual desire.	Desire should be avoided. It is the longing of the body, not of the soul, and therefore harms the Stoic rather than helps him.	Sappho gives physical descriptions of desire as painful and overpowering.	Desire is a weapon which can be used against the opposite sex, but it is also a driving force behind our actions.
Homoerotic relationships	There is evidence for homoerotic relationships between men and women. Homoerotic relationships between men were a key element of ancient Greek society.	Homoerotic relationships between male citizens are not tolerated. However, homoerotic relationships with an infamis or slave are acceptable. There is evidence for female homoerotic relationships.	In *Symposium*, Pausanias describes how love can develop in a homoerotic relationship between an erastes and an eromenos.	Homoerotic relationships are an indulgence of lust, since there is no hope of procreation through them. Therefore, they should be avoided.	Sappho writes principally about homoerotic relationships. It is possible that she writes about homoerotic relationships which took place before girls were married.	Ovid is unconcerned with homoerotic relationships in the *Ars Amatoria* because he pictures a world where all men and women are overcome with lust for the opposite sex rather than their own.

What to Expect in the A Level Exam for Love and Relationships

This chapter aims to show the types of questions you are likely to get in the written examination. It offers some advice on how to answer the questions and will help you avoid common errors.

THE EXAMINATION

This component of the A Level Classical Civilisation examination is designed to test your knowledge, understanding and evaluation of Love and Relationships in the classical world. The examination is worth 75 marks and lasts 1 hour and 45 minutes. This represents 30% of the total marks for the A Level.

There are two Assessment Objectives in your A Level, and questions will be designed to test these areas. These Assessment Objectives are outlined in the table below together with the total number of marks available for each on the paper:

	Assessment objective	**Marks**
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: • literature, visual/material culture and classical thought • how sources and ideas reflect, and influence, their cultural contexts • possible interpretations of sources, perspectives and ideas by different audiences and individuals.	35
AO2	Critically analyse, interpret and evaluate literature, visual/material culture and classical thought, using evidence to make substantiated judgements and produce coherent and reasoned arguments.	40

EXAM STRUCTURE AND QUESTION TYPES

The exam is divided into two sections, Section A and Section B. Section A has four types of question, while Section B has just one type of question. The question types are as follows:

- a number of short answer questions (5 marks in total)
- 10-mark stimulus question

- 10-mark ideas question
- 20-mark shorter essay question
- 30-mark essay question

Try to plan your time well. The shorter essay question and the essay question together make up 50 of the 75 marks available, and so you should aim to spend the majority of your time on these two questions.

Section A
SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS AND STIMULUS QUESTION

The paper will start with a passage from one of your prescribed authors. The questions following it will be formatted as follows:

- one or more short answer questions relating to the passage (worth 2 or 3 marks in total)
- a 10-mark stimulus question related to this passage

For example, you might be given the following section of *Ars Amatoria* book 3 as a stimulus passage, which will be named Source A:

> I'll start with how you look: good wine comes from vines
> that are looked after, tall crops stand in cultivated soil.
> Beauty's a gift of the gods: how many can boast it?
> The larger number among you lack such gifts.
> Taking pains brings beauty: beauty neglected dies,
> even though it's like that of Venus, the Idalian goddess.
> If girls of old didn't cultivate their bodies in that way,
> well they had no cultivated men in those days:
> if Andromache was dressed in healthy clothes,
> what wonder? Her husband was a rough soldier!
> Do you suppose Ajax's wife would come to him all smart,
> when his outer layer was seven hides of an ox?
> There was crude simplicity before: now Rome is golden,
> and owns the vast wealth of the conquered world.
> Look what the Capitol is now, and what it was:
> you'd say it belonged to a different Jove.
> The Senate-House, now worthy of such debates,
> was made of wattle when Tatius held the kingship.
> Where the Palatine now gleams with Apollo and our leaders,
> what was that but pasture for ploughmen's oxen?
> Others may delight in ancient times: I congratulate myself
> on having been born just now: this age suits my nature.

Ovid *Ars Amatoria 3*, 101–122

An example of a short answer question following this would be:

Question: '… Her husband was a rough soldier! Do you suppose Ajax's wife would come to him all smart …': What are the names of Andromache's husband and Ajax's wife? [2]

Answer: Hector [1] and Tecmessa [1]

As you can see here, the short answer questions will test your knowledge or understanding of something related to the stimulus passage and will only be AO1. There is no analysis or evaluation required.

An example of a 10-mark stimulus question might be:

Question: What point is Ovid making about beauty in this passage? Explain your answer using evidence from the passage. [10]

Of the 10 marks, 5 are available for AO1 and 5 for AO2. AO1 marks are awarded for the selection of material from the source, AO2 marks for the interpretation, analysis or evaluation of this material. These questions are marked according to a stimulus question marking grid, which you can view on the OCR website.

Answer: As the marking grid indicates, you should aim to make a range of points which give clear and thoughtful analysis and are backed up with good supporting evidence from the passage. Here are examples of two points you could make:

Point 1: Ovid uses an agricultural metaphor in the first two lines of this passage, claiming that 'good wine comes from vines that are looked after, tall crops stand in cultivated soil'. By comparing beauty to wine and crops, Ovid makes it clear that beauty also needs to be worked at and that all women can effectively be farmers of their own looks.

Point 2: Ovid says that times have changed and that women now need to work hard to look beautiful, using mythical allusions and history to back up his point: 'The Senate-House, now worthy of such debates, was made of wattle when Tatius held the kingship.' Ovid uses the Senate-House and its early and poor foundations to emphasise that looks were unimportant in ancient times (Tatius being an ancient Italian king), but that everything needs to be beautiful and richly decorated now.

In both examples, notice that there is analysis which is supported by evidence from the passage. Try to make your arguments as clear and distinct as possible, and always back them up with evidence from the passage. Note that you do not always need to quote directly from the passage, but can paraphrase from it or simply refer to a part of it.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS AND IDEAS QUESTION

There will then be a sentence in **bold type,** which will introduce an idea or concept you have studied. The questions following it will be structured as follows:

- one or two short answer questions related to the idea introduced (worth 2 or 3 marks in total, adding up to a combined total of 5 marks with the earlier short answer questions)
- a 10-mark question related to the idea introduced in the initial sentence in bold

For example, you might be given the following as an ‘idea’ sentence:

Seneca was considered a Stoic philosopher and viewed desire as a powerful and dangerous emotion.

An example of a short answer question following this would be:

Question: Give three Stoic ideas about the concept of ‘virtue’. [3]

Answer: Any three of the following would be appropriate answers: True virtue should be sought by all people [1], virtue could only be achieved through the careful control of emotions [1], virtue was the only path to true happiness [1], to be virtuous was a natural state [1], the soul was rational [1].

As you can see here, the short answer questions will again only be AO1 and will test your knowledge or understanding of something related to the idea introduced. There is no analysis or evaluation required.

An example of a 10-mark ideas question would be:

Question: How were Plato’s ideas about restraining desire reflected in classical Athens? [10]

Of the 10 marks available, 5 are for AO1 and 5 for AO2. AO1 marks are awarded for knowledge and understanding relating to the idea introduced, AO2 marks are awarded for the interpretation, analysis or evaluation of this material. These questions are marked according to an ideas question marking grid, which you can view on the OCR website.

Answer: This should be answered in a very similar way to the stimulus 10-mark question. You should again try to make a range of distinct points. This time, each of them should be backed up by factual evidence you have learnt in your studies. Here are two examples:

Point 1: Plato stressed that desire should be controlled for the general good of the state. The two horses which represent different impulses on the soul should be governed by a charioteer. Secure paternity was important in classical Athens, particularly following Pericles’ citizenship law in 451, and so the encouragement of stable relationships was a key contributing factor. Athenian men had a number of ways in which they might satiate their desire and yet not impregnate women who were not their wives.

Point 2: A number of Plato’s characters argue that homoerotic desire was an important part of society and led to a number of positive outcomes for the state such as social cohesion and mutual inspiration. Homoerotic relationships were an important part of the gymnasium and symposium culture of ancient Athens.

In both these examples, the first part shows factual knowledge, which then leads to the clear analysis.

SHORTER ESSAY QUESTION

The final question in Section A will be the 20-mark shorter essay question. The title of this essay will allow you to draw on material you have used in either the stimulus question or the ideas question above should you wish to. Of the 20 marks available, 10 are for AO1 and 10 for AO2. This question has its own tailored marking grid, which you can view on the OCR website.

An example of such a question might be as follows:

Question: To what extent were Seneca's views about relationships influenced by his cultural context? You may use your knowledge of Seneca's ideas about desire as a starting point and should justify your response. [20]

When you **plan** your answer to this question, it is important to notice that the question invites you to use your knowledge of Seneca's ideas as a starting point. Therefore, you should make reference to his ideas about desire before moving on to wider points from your knowledge of Seneca and his cultural context. It might be a good idea to write down some key points of factual evidence which you are going to use for AO1. You might look to draw on the following evidence:

- Seneca views desire as dangerous and harmful, both to the soul and to the body.
- Seneca considers pure love and marriage to be something close to friendship, above the sexual desires of the body.
- Augustus passed strict laws on marriage in 18 BC.
- Seneca was a tutor to Emperor Nero, who was famous for his lewd and lecherous behaviour.
- Stoicism was concerned with teaching morality and the avoidance of vices.

After this, you should look for any key words and phrases in the question. The word 'justify' is especially important. From this word it is clear that you must give a reason for your opinion and you must explain why the evidence you use shows the influence of Seneca's cultural context on him. You should be careful to avoid listing things which you know about Roman society in the 1st century AD, since you will not be showing any evidence of meeting the criteria for AO2. A question like this is quite free, but you must ensure that you are meeting both Assessment Objectives when answering it. The marking grid indicates that you will be marked on the overall range and quality of your arguments and of your supporting evidence.

Section B

ESSAY QUESTION

In Section B you will be given a choice of two essays. **You should only do one essay.** The essay is out of 30 marks, with 10 marks for AO1 and 20 marks for AO2 (this question also has its own tailored marking grid, which you can download from the OCR website).

However, this does not mean that you should be aiming to give evidence and evaluation in exactly that ratio. A good essay is likely to have more evaluation than evidence in any case, and so you should just aim to write the best essay you can, where you back up your arguments with evidence from your studies. What you should avoid doing, however, is over-narrating: telling the examiner about the content of a prescribed source rather than analysing it according to the question.

The first thing you need to do is to decide which question to choose. Make sure that you read both questions carefully and think about what is being asked. It is a common mistake for candidates to read the question as they want it to be, rather than as it is. For example, consider the following question:

Question: 'In the ancient world, love was seen only as a source of pain and distress.' To what extent do you agree with this description of the ancient representation of love? [30]

You need to think about how each of your authors and key thinkers represent love, and then compare how clear an impression each author gives. However, notice that it would be possible to misread this question. A learner may read it as: '"Love was seen as a source of pain and distress." To what extent do you agree with this description of the ancient representation of love?' This misreading omits to deal with the word 'only' in the title and would generate an answer which analyses only two aspects of the ancient representation of love, disregarding the more positive descriptions. You would be penalised heavily for making a mistake such as this, so take great care to read the question carefully and be sure exactly what it is asking for. Therefore, when you make your choice about which essay to attempt, ensure that you have read each question carefully and be very sure about what each one is asking for. It may be that you think that you could answer both. This is a good problem to have! Make a clear decision one way or another and then stick with it.

Try to ensure that you give your essay a clear structure. Perhaps draw up a plan paragraph by paragraph or argument by argument. While it is a good idea to have a brief introduction and conclusion to the essay, try not to make these too long. Your introduction should briefly outline the key issues, and perhaps the line you are going to take, while the conclusion should be short and simply summarise the key points you have made to conclude your argument. To score good marks in AO1, make sure you choose a range of factual evidence from at least two of your authors. To score good marks in AO2, make sure you examine the issue and weigh up your arguments carefully. You will want to make a variety of points, and again you may find that there are arguments on both sides.

Modern Scholarship

In this essay question, you are required to show knowledge of secondary sources, scholars and academic works in your answer. This requirement of the exam is supported in the textbook by 'Modern Scholarship' boxes. The OCR rubric says that 'Learners are expected to make use of scholarly views, academic approaches and sources to support their argument'. It is essential that you build in such material in order to do well on this question. How should you do this?

First of all, you of course need to read more widely about the topic. In this book, you have been given suggestions for articles and books to read on a variety of topics relating to Love and Relationships in the classical world. Try to follow up as many as possible, and take notes about some of the key arguments that scholars make. It is especially interesting when two authors disagree with each other on a topic. When referring to the view of a scholar, you need not quote them directly, although if you are able to remember a few words that they have written accurately, then that will be very impressive. However, it may be that you refer to a general argument that they put forward in a book, an article or a chapter, though you will not be expected to quote the name of a book or give a chapter reference.

Let us take an example relating to the question above. You may wish to talk about Plato's ideas on the influence of philosophy on love and desire. This is explained very well in 'The Cambridge Companion to Plato' ed. Kraut (Cambridge University Press, 1992) in the chapter on Platonic Love, written by G. R. F. Ferrari. Ferrari makes the following point on p. 265 about lovers in *Symposium*: '… lovers are approved of who are not simply attracted to the beauty of their beloved's body but seek also to mould his character …'. This is an interesting point, arguing that approval is reserved for lovers who improve and educate their beloved. You may wish to reflect more on this view in your essay and compare it to the representation of love in Sappho and Ovid. You do not necessarily need to quote the details of where you read the ideas, and it will be enough to mention the scholar's name and explain what they say.

Above all, make use of secondary sources relevant to the question you are answering. To use a secondary source well you should think carefully about why it is supporting your argument or showing a different argument, and make it clear why you are including it. You might want to agree or disagree with the scholarly view, in which case you will need to explain why you do so. You may not remember everything about the secondary source you have read, but if you ensure the examiner understands what you are using and why, this will strengthen your argument. Using secondary sources in this way gives you a skill that is crucial at university level in many different subjects because engaging with what other people have thought about a particular topic enriches your own understanding.

PART 2

POLITICS OF THE LATE REPUBLIC

Introduction to Politics of the Late Republic

According to ancient Roman historians, change was nothing new to the political arena in Rome. Legend had it that Rome was established by Romulus in 753 BC. A succession of seven kings continued to rule the city until 509. The final king of Rome, Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, was expelled by a popular uprising championed by Lucius Junius Brutus, the head of the king's bodyguard. After the monarchy, a republic was created. This political system continued until the 1st century BC, when it disintegrated in a prolonged period of extreme political turbulence. This culminated in a series of bloody civil wars from which the constitution of imperial rule emerged in 27.

By 79, Rome had witnessed a shift from the rule of elite families in the senate to the rise of individuals such as Sulla and Marius, where the currency of power lay in popular and military support rather than ancestral lineage and wealth. Appealing to the populace in republican Rome, however, did not simply equate to a political idealism based on social change. So what did motivate the seemingly 'populist' leaders at this time? While it is hard to identify or disentangle social idealism from personal ambition behind the actions of individuals of this period, the key political players were united in their recognition of the power to be harnessed from people outside of the senate and the old system of government.

Demographic upheaval, the indomitable rise of a politics that appealed to the ordinary citizen rather than the elite, and the demise of the 'traditional ways' are subjects that ring as true today as they ever did. The period we are studying here – from 79 to 43 – witnessed considerable and irrevocable political change. Focusing on three outstanding statesmen from that time – the daunting Cato the Younger, Julius Caesar the formidable strategist and Cicero the brilliant orator – we shall explore the conflicting political values that contributed to the 'fall' of the Roman Republic.

General Bibliography

Marin, P. (2009), *Blood in the Forum: The struggle for the Roman Republic*, Continuum.
Murrell, J. (2008), *Cicero and the Roman Republic*, Cambridge University Press.
Scullard, H. H. (1982), *From the Gracchi to Nero*, 5th Edition, Routledge.
Shotter, D. (2005), *The Fall of the Roman Republic*, 2nd Edition, Routledge.
Steel, C. (2013), *The End of the Roman Republic*, Edinburgh University Press.
Tempest, K. (2011), *Cicero. Politics and Persuasion in Ancient Rome*, Continuum.

EXAM OVERVIEW H408/33

Your assessment is a written examination testing AO1 and AO2. It is

30% of the A Level	1 hr 45 mins	75 marks

35 marks will test AO1: demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- literature, visual/material culture and classical thought
- how sources and ideas reflect, and influence, their cultural contexts
- possible interpretations of sources, perspectives and ideas by different audiences and individuals

40 marks will test AO2: critically analyse, interpret and evaluate literature, visual/material culture and classical thought, using evidence to make substantiated judgements and produce coherent and reasoned arguments.

The examination will consist of two sections.

All questions in **Section A** are compulsory. There are four question types:

- short-answer questions
- 10-mark stimulus question using a passage from the prescribed sources
- 10-mark question discussing an idea from one of the key thinkers
- 20-mark essay

Section B has one question type:

- 30-mark essay

There is a choice of one from two essays. In these essays learners will be expected to make use of secondary sources and academic views to support their argument.

FIRST CENTURY BC TIMELINE

81	Sulla steps down from dictatorship
80	Sulla's consulship
79	Sulla becomes private citizen
78	Sulla dies
75	Cicero's quaestorship (Lilybaeum, Sicily)
73–71	Verres' governorship (Sicily)
70	Consulships of Pompey and Crassus
	Cicero's prosecution of Verres
69	Cicero's aedileship
	Caesar's quaestorship (Spain)
67	*lex Gabinia* granting Pompey *imperium* against the pirates
66	*lex Manilia* granting Pompey *imperium* against Mithridates

65	Caesar’s aedileship
64	Cato’s quaestorship
63	Cicero’s consulship
	Caesar *Pontifex Maximus*
	lex agraria of Rullus
	Pro Rabirio
	Trial of Murena
	Catilinarian conspiracy
	Senatus consultum ultimum on the conspirators (December)
62	The Bona Dea scandal
	Cato’s tribuneship
	Caesar’s praetorship
	Pompey returns from the East
61	Trial of Clodius
	Caesar’s governorship (Further Spain)
60	Caesar returns from Spain
	First Triumvirate is formed: Pompey, Crassus and Caesar
59	Caesar’s consulship
	Pompey marries Julia, Caesar’s daughter
	Clodius adopted into plebeian family
	Caesar granted *imperium* to pacify Gaul
58	Clodius’ tribuneship
	Cicero is exiled
	Caesar departs for Gaul
	Cato is sent to annex Cyprus
57	Cicero’s return from exile
	Pompey five years’ *imperium* to stabilise corn supply to Rome
	Gang warfare and rioting in Rome
56	The conference at Luca (April)
	Cato returns
55	Second consulship of Pompey and Crassus
	Caesar given a further five year command in Gaul
	Pompey given five year command of Spain in absence

	Crassus given five year command in Syria
54	Death of Julia
	Pompey in Rome, governing Spain in absence
	Caesar in Gaul and crosses over to Britain
	Crassus in Syria for Parthian campaign
	Cato's praetorship
	Riots in Rome
53	Continued riots in Rome; no consul elected
	Death of Crassus at Carrhae
52	Clodius killed by Milo
	Pompey appointed sole consul (to August)
51	Cato fails to become consul
51–50	Cicero's governorship (Cilicia)
50	Curio's tribuneship
49	Caesar crosses the Rubicon into Italy
	Civil war
	Senate is evacuated from Rome with Pompey to Greece; Cato and Cicero support Pompey
48	Caesar's second consulship
	Caesar's dictatorship (11 days)
	Defeat of Pompey by Caesar at Pharsalus (August)
	Death of Pompey in Egypt
47	Caesar's dictatorship in absence
	Caesar returns briefly to Italy then sails for North Africa to confront anti-Caesarians led by Cato
46	Suicide of Cato after defeat at Thapsus
	Caesar's dictatorship and third consulship; returns to Rome, then leaves for Spain to deal with last anti-Caesarians
45	Last of Pompeians defeated by Caesar at Munda in Spain
	Caesar returns to Rome to great honours
	Caesar's dictatorship and fourth consulship
	Cicero writes eulogy to Cato; Caesar writes *Anti-Cato*
44	Caesar becomes *dictator perpetuo* and assumes fifth consulship
	Assassination of Julius Caesar, 15 March (Ides of March)

	Octavian named as heir and returns from Epirus
	Antony receives command of Gaul
	Cicero starts to deliver the *Philippics*
43	Outbreak of civil war; Mark Antony is declared enemy of the state
	Siege of Mutina
	Deaths of the consuls Hirtius and Pansa
	Octavian occupies Rome and assumes consulship (August)
	Formation of the Second Triumvirate – Octavian, Antony and Lepidus (November)
	Proscriptions
	Death of Cicero (7 December)

2.1 The Background of the Late Republic

TOPIC OVERVIEW

- Roman social hierarchy; patrician and plebeian families, the *nobiles* (nobles), the *equites* and the idea of a *novus homo* (new man)
- The *res publica* and the organisation of the state, including:
    - the offices of the *cursus honorum*
    - elections
    - the tribal assembly, centuriate assembly and senate
    - the government of the provinces
    - *imperium* (command)
    - dictatorship
- The ideas and views of the *populares* (favouring the people) and *optimates* or *boni* (aristocrats or Good Men)
- The role and importance of patronage, *amicitia* (alliance) and *inimicitia* (personal hostility), idealism and personal ambition.

There are no prescribed sources for this topic, but students are encouraged to draw on any other appropriate sources and evidence they have studied in the extended-response exam questions. Here are some suggestions:

CW

- Plutarch, *Life of Marius*
- Plutarch, *Life of Sulla*
- Polybius, *Histories* 6.11.11–18

In this topic, we shall be examining some of the background events and influential people leading up to 79 BC, as well as exploring the established social and political structures of Republican Rome.

patricians families whose ancestry could be traced to the early days of Rome, when they formed a ruling aristocratic group from whom Romulus was said to have chosen the first hundred senators

plebeians (plebs) Roman citizens who were not patrician. Originally a 'lower' order, the plebeians gained significant wealth and nobility as a result of an ongoing 'Conflict of the Orders' from the 5th to the 3rd centuries BC

equites a rank in the Roman class system which grew in wealth and status through occupations in commerce and finance

ROMAN SOCIAL HIERARCHY

The Roman Republic was subject to huge social change as its territories expanded over the centuries. A clear social hierarchy had informed the way in which the state had functioned in its earliest days. Initially there were two social orders – the **patricians** and the **plebeians**. The patricians were significant landowners who occupied a central and privileged position in all spheres of public affairs – political, religious, legal and military. Plebeians comprised the rest of the citizen body, including farmers, tradesmen and craftsmen; in the early days they were excluded from positions of authority in public affairs. Plebeians and patricians could not intermarry. However, by the first half of the 4th century BC the plebeians had successfully gained much political, religious and legal equality in recognition of their military importance and the growing need for capable administrators of the newly acquired territories, and wealth was no longer a discriminator between the two social orders.

Particularly pivotal was the year 146. With the destruction of Corinth and Carthage, Rome added two new wealthy territories to her state. A seemingly expansionist foreign policy had many significant repercussions at home for the Romans. Wealth through plunder, trade and, later, taxation contributed to a new level of luxurious lifestyle, particularly for elite families in Rome. Outside the capital, however, those farmer-citizens who had now spent much of their lives in the army were returning to find their unworked farms in a poor state and themselves forced to head to Rome to seek alternative employment. An influx of slaves acquired during Rome's conquests had meant that there was also less demand for farm labourers. The city of Rome was to become quickly overcrowded, with a new ever-growing urban population, much of which lived in poverty and needed food and employment.

FIGURE 2.1
Cicero as politician and orator.

Another significant social change arose from Rome's territorial expansion across the Mediterranean: a new order emerged, known as the equestrians – **equites**. These were men who took advantage of the great commercial opportunities now available. While members of the aristocracy were landowners and dedicated to public life and politics, they were forbidden by law to undertake commercial trade or banking; the equites – a relatively new class of business men – reaped the financial advantages that had arisen. With no equivalent to a ‘civil service’ to administer Rome’s newly acquired vast territory, the equites rose to be a powerful force in Roman society – wealthy and educated, and one which increasingly considered itself to have a right to be more formally included in Roman public and political life.

By 79, many traditional definitions and roles of the social orders had changed in line with great demographic change. This was to be a significant contributive factor in the evolution of politics over the coming period.

THE ORGANISATION OF THE STATE

The **res publica** (Roman Republic) essentially consisted of the **Senatus Populusque Romanus (SPQR)** – the **senate** and the people of Rome. Within the senate there was a hierarchical ladder of offices known as the **cursus honorum**. Polybius – a Greek writer of the 2nd century BC – considered the state to be an excellent hybrid of monarchy (**consuls**), oligarchy (i.e. small group of people running a country – here, the senate) and democracy (the voting people) (Polybius 6.11.11).

Each rung on the cursus honorum was designed to ensure that if a politician reached the top and became consul he would have acquired a broad and deep experience of most aspects of government along the way. The two consuls shared the ultimate decision-making, ensuring a balance of power missing from the previous monarchy. They were invested with **imperium** – the ultimate authority including command in war and the interpretation of law (the latter invested also in the position of **praetor**). The consuls changed each year, publicly elected by Roman citizens. The senate formed an advisory body to the consuls and included magistracies with different areas of responsibility which made up the cursus honorum. Praetors were responsible for overseeing the law courts and matters judicial; **aediles** were responsible for the maintenance of public buildings, food and water supplies and public festivals; and **quaestors** looked after the state treasury and financial administration.

res publica literally meaning ‘public affairs’; this was the term in Latin that the Romans used to refer to the Republican constitution that had replaced the monarchy

Senatus Populusque Romanus (abbrev. **SPQR**) the Roman state: ‘the Senate and the People of Rome’

senate a deliberative assembly central to the government of the Roman Republic

cursus honorum a system of political offices in the senate in Rome, elected annually

consul one of the two leading senators who presided over the senate

imperium the power invested in a consul giving him the military command of the state army

praetor second in authority to the consuls and presiding over the law courts in Rome

aedile an optional magistracy; responsible for the provision of games and public services in Rome

quaestor the first rung on the ladder of offices; responsible for the state treasury

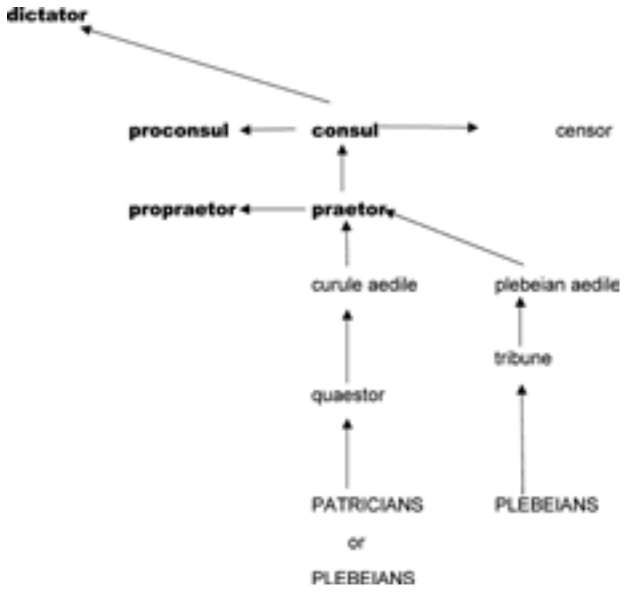


FIGURE 2.2
Diagram of the cursus honorum.

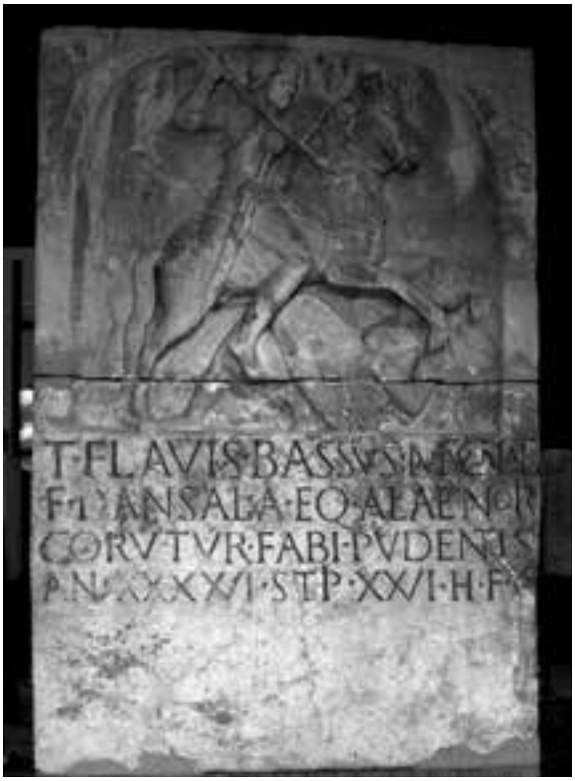


FIGURE 2.3
No depiction of an eques survives from the Republican period, but this 1st-century AD relief shows an eques on his tombstone.

There were, however, other important political offices outside of the cursus honorum.

Ten **tribunes of the plebs** were elected on an annual basis by the **tribal assembly**. It was the duty of a tribune, consul or praetor to call the tribal assembly together and confirm any resolutions passed by it. The bodies of the tribunes were considered sacrosanct and so they were safe from personal danger. Their role was to champion and protect the lives and property of the plebeians. Tribunes had the right to summon and attend meetings of the senate and held the powerful right to veto decrees of the senate and of their fellow tribunes.

Every five years, two **censors** would be elected by the **centuriate assembly** for a period of eighteen months for the purpose of carrying out the census, including a review of the senatorial roll. They also categorised men and their property both for the public assemblies and for their qualification to the senatorial and equestrian orders. The censors had the power to take to court anyone obstructing the collection of the census data, and prepared the lists of the members of the senate. They were also charged with responsibility for the moral behaviour of Roman citizens and could even expel senators for what was considered immoral behaviour.

There was also the exceptional role of **dictator.** A dictator would be appointed only in times of state crisis and for a strictly limited period of six months. He was awarded the imperium of both consuls and would be appointed by the consuls, proposed by the senate.

The number of senators in the Republic was 300, increased later by Sulla in 80 (see p. 106) to around 600. Annual election to magistracies was deliberately designed to prevent an individual from gaining power for extended periods of time. Added to this was a minimum age requirement for each office, encouraging magistrates to have acquired experience and skill, and enforcing gaps between periods of office.

tribunes of the plebs ten officials elected from the plebeian order to act as a check on the senate and the cursus honorum in Rome

tribal assembly the body of Roman citizens organised into the traditional thirty-five 'tribes' of Rome

censor an official elected for eighteen months, responsible for the census and supervising public morality

centuriate assembly the body of Roman citizens organised into 193 voting 'centuries'

dictator a position of state established in periods of military crisis and awarded to one man by the consuls for six months only

governor a senator selected from those who had previously served as praetors or consuls, responsible for the smooth running, safety and taxation of a Roman province

nobiles senatorial families distinguished by the inclusion of a consul in their ancestry

Outside of Italy, by 79, Rome had ten Mediterranean provinces to govern. **Governors** were selected for each from a pool of propraetors and proconsuls – men who had filled the position of praetor and consul (respectively) the preceding year. Their main duty was to defend the peace of the province both in terms of law and militarily and to ensure taxes were collected and received safely in Rome.

Apart from the ten tribunes, for a long time the senate comprised the landed aristocracy, in particular the **nobiles –** an elite group of families who could claim a consul in their past family lineage. This effectively meant that military, political, economic, legal, religious and social organisation and governance of the Roman Republic was managed by a circle of sometimes fewer than twenty families. The clans of the Valerii and Fabii, for example, could each boast forty-five consuls in their family lines (see Syme, *The Roman Revolution*, p. 18). While elbowing for power internally, this oligarchy remained relatively stable until events that came to a head in 133 (see Key Event on page 107).

It was the annual elections held usually in summer in the city of Rome that had prompted Polybius to identify a partially democratic system of government in his evaluation of the constitution of the Roman Republic. The centuriate and tribal assemblies would congregate on the Field of Mars (the 'Campus Martius') just outside the city of Rome, and elections would take place for each of the magistracies of the cursus honorum, the tribunes and, if necessary, the censors.

The centuriate assembly was one of the two main popular assemblies of Rome. Each citizen was allocated to one of the 193 divisions called 'centuries' determined by his wealth. The greater the wealth of an individual, the fewer the members of his century, and since the richest centuries got to vote first, wealthy individuals had the most influence over the outcome of the vote. It was the overall vote of the whole century, not each individual, that counted towards the end result. It was this voting body that elected the most important positions of political power, those that would wield imperium – the roles of consul, praetor and censor, and it was only men of these offices who could summon a meeting of this assembly. The centuriate assembly also decided upon matters of peace and war. In the tribal assembly, on the other hand, each citizen was allocated to one of the thirty-five divisions known as 'tribes' determined by either his family or where he lived. It was the overall vote of the whole tribe, not each individual, that counted towards the end result. The tribal assembly was responsible for electing the lesser senatorial magistrates and voted on proposals of law; it could also act a court of appeal to cases that did not involve capital punishment.

By the mid-2nd century BC, however, this aspect of Roman politics did not place as much power in the hands of the populace as it might have seemed. Although the senate was in theory only an advisory body, laws and decisions supported by the senate were invariably passed by the public assemblies. It should also be queried just how much of the Roman citizenship was represented at elections. While local farmers could still come into Rome to vote, as before, the majority of those present would have inevitably consisted of the huge new urban population. The electoral system that had once so successfully fulfilled the needs of a small city-state surrounded by an integrated local farming community had failed to grow with its changing demographics and expanded territory.

Political factions

There were no recognisable political parties in ancient Rome as we have today in Western democracies. Instead two 'factions' within the nobiles were emerging by 133 – **optimates** (or **boni)** and **populares**. The main concern of the optimates was to protect the traditional role of the senate, working primarily in the interests of the dominant oligarchy. A **popularis** senator, on the other hand, promoted measures designed to appeal to the general populace.

In the second half of the 2nd century BC, a notable popularis, the tribune Tiberius Gracchus, essentially promoted the role of the people of Rome over that of the senate, turning to them first to deliberate matters of legislative reform (see box, p. 107), then of foreign and financial policy. He had had a fellow tribune deposed by the people, and even suggested his re-election to the tribuneship – an office traditionally defined as being of one year tenure only. Why had he done this? Was he motivated by personal ambition and had taken advantage of a new opportunity to aggrandize his own status? Was it done in revenge against the senate for perceived grievances of the past? Scullard speaks for many modern scholars when he suggests there is 'no good reason to deny that [Tiberius Gracchus] aimed at disinterested social and economic reform' (*From the Gracchi to Nero* p. 37). In other words, Gracchus appears to have been altruistically motivated as a genuine social reformer. The political changes brought about by Rome's successful military conquests in the 2nd century BC and

optimates a group of aristocratic senatorial families concerned to preserve the political and social status quo

boni men considered to be ideal statesmen: well educated, traditional, patriotic and experienced in politics

populares (sing. **popularis**) noble senatorial families that aimed to secure power through appealing to the people

KEY INDIVIDUAL

Lucius Cornelius Sulla Felix ('Sulla')

Date: 138–78

Roman general and statesman

Born into an impoverished patrician family, Sulla was to become renowned for his military strategy and excellence. He was dictator in 81, consul in 80 and retired in 79.

S & C

Sulla is notorious for his lengthy proscription lists while dictator – names of individual enemies drawn up for execution, whose property would then be confiscated. Research the proscriptions of Sulla. Who was proscribed? What happened to their wealth? How might this have affected the make-up of the senate?

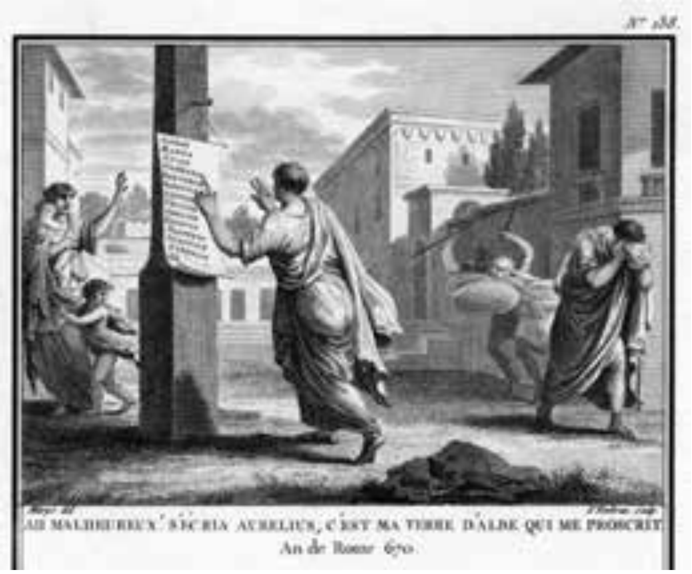

AH MALHEUREUX' S'ECRIA AURELIUS, C'EST MA TERRE D'ALBE QUI ME PROSCRIT
An de Rome 670

FIGURE 2.4
This 19th-century engraving imagines the scene as Sulla's proscriptions were posted in Rome.

KEY EVENT

The Land Bill of Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus

Date: 133

Tiberius Gracchus proposed the redistribution of public land to benefit those suffering from the dispossession of their farms while they had been in service to the Roman army. Relatively uncontroversial in itself, Tiberius bypassed the senate and took his proposal directly to the assembly of the people for confirmation. The bill was vetoed by a fellow tribune whom Tiberius promptly suggested be dismissed. Tiberius proposal was passed, his opposing tribune deposed and the land bill was passed by the people of Rome independently of the senate. A group of senators and others who did not approve of his methods beat Tiberius and three hundred of his supporters to death, throwing their bodies into the river Tiber by night. The event was to mark a turning point in the political stability of the Roman Republic.

KEY INDIVIDUAL

Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus

Date: *c.* 164–133

Popularis tribune of the plebs in 133

From an illustrious family of individuals who had held many successful positions of state, Tiberius Gracchus proved his own military worth and held important political and religious offices, and had prestigious friends and relatives within the senate. He was killed by optimate sympathisers in 133 following his championship of radical agrarian reform. His position of political reform was continued by his brother Gaius Gracchus.

their consequent impact on the lives of Romans in Italy must have felt to many like the start of a revolution. Opportunities for individuals to gather real political power were seized so that by 79, when Sulla retired, the Roman state had witnessed quite radical political change, including a period of civil war.

THE TRADITION AND ROLE OF PATRONAGE IN ROMAN LIFE AND POLITICS

patron a man of significant social standing able to offer resources (financial, legal or simply food) to his clients in return for loyalty

clients citizens who were bound by loyalty to a wealthy patron to support him in all his public interests (e.g. in elections) in return for support and resources

Patronage was a system of reciprocal loyalty that informed all walks of Roman life. With no central system of state-organised social welfare, the relationship between a **patron** and his **clients** was an extremely important one. In early Rome the patron–client relationship had manifested itself in patrician families protecting poorer citizens in return for their public support. Patrons might offer financial or legal help, for example, or simply food rations when needed. By the late Republic, nobiles in particular had amassed very large numbers of clients whose interests they looked after, and who in turn promoted them.

As Scullard notes, '[r]eal power does not always reside where it officially appears to belong' (*From the Gracchi to Nero* p. 6), and the patron–client relationship was not defined by law or any other constitutional set of rules. From the early days, it had inevitably informed the politics of the state. While the nobiles could offer the all-important family prestige to their election campaigning, they also had the money and the clients to support them successfully through the election process. Conversely, a man keen to penetrate the political system from an unimportant family was faced primarily with the obstacle of having no ready-made political support base. On the rare occasion this happened, it was through garnering support along a non-established route, for example Gaius Marius (see p. 108). Such a man was known as a **novus homo**. Marius' successful attainment of the consulship in itself, however, illustrates the revolution of politics in this period.

novus homo literally, 'new man', one who had not only managed to break into the ranks of the senate, but even to become consul, with no history of the consulship (or sometimes even senatorial rank) in his family lineage

KEY INDIVIDUAL

Gaius Marius
Date: 157–86
Roman general and statesman
An equestrian and novus homo, Marius married the patrician Julia – aunt of Julius Caesar. In 87 he fought Sulla who had marched on Rome. He died in January 86 during what was to be his seventh consulship.

amicitia (pl. **amicitiae**) a system of family alliances established to consolidate and further the success of influential Romans

inimicitia an opposite system to amicitia, where individual disagreements could extend into significant hostility between families

A similar but more horizontal system of key relationships nurtured in Rome was that of **amicitia** (and its opposite **inimicitia**). Amicitiae were alliances established between families for mutual benefit. They could take many forms, from offering political, legal or financial support to marriages or even the adoption of grown men as heirs, all of which were arranged to cement interfamilial ties. Adoption of boys to ensure a male heir was a fairly common procedure in ancient Rome, especially among the upper classes. The obligations of amicitiae outlived individuals and were passed down through the generations. Syme described it as 'a weapon of politics' (*The Roman Revolution* pp. 12, 13). Unsurprisingly, this was a system designed and perpetuated to establish the continued supremacy of the elite oligarchy at Rome, but it could also offer opportunities for outsiders to gain a foothold onto the more constitutional system of Roman politics. A novus homo would have had to focus on creating new amicitiae.

The potential of the patron–client system and the role of amicitia in Rome were fully realised from the 2nd century BC. It was extended to the military world. Rome's army had consisted originally purely of citizenry who could demonstrate an income large enough to pay for their armour and equipment (as certified by the censors). Each male citizen was duty-bound to serve the state militarily, and this loyalty to Rome was a defining feature of the army. Furthermore, every man was a stakeholder in the success of the army – each Roman soldier was fighting for his land. Following the conquests of the 2nd century especially soldiers were to return home after long periods of service to discover themselves dispossessed of their lands. With no source of paid occupation, thousands of veterans made up a new body of political significance. The army was central to Rome's future stability and growth, but the poverty of the veteran soldiers also meant that significantly fewer suitable citizens were financially eligible to join the army again as conscripts. The consequences were important, including of course a reduction in the size of the Roman army.

When Marius, as consul in 107, removed the financial criteria for eligibility, the results were to change the fundamental nature of the make-up of the Roman army as well as its self-perceived function. The historian Syme in *The Roman Revolution* (p. 15) describes it thus:

> The soldiers, now recruited from the poorest classes in Italy, were ceasing to feel allegiance to the State; military service was for livelihood, or from constraint, not a natural and normal part of a citizen's duty. The necessities of a world-empire and the ambition of generals led to the creation of extraordinary commands in the province. The general had to be a politician, for his legionaries were a host of clients, looking to their leader for spoil in war and estates in Italy when their campaigns were over. But not veterans only were attached to the cause – from his provincial demands the dynast won to his allegiance and personal following (*clients*) towns and whole regions, provinces and nations, kings and tetrarchs.

In short, a man in charge of an army by the late 2nd century was effectively treated as a patron, with expectations of and from his clients – his army.

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

> The rise to professional armies was perhaps unavoidable, but more than that, as the senate did not adequately recognise that without a state-sponsored army, it would fall to individual generals to provide for their troops, and ultimately, reward them with booty and the possibility of land upon retirement.
>
> P. Marin, *Blood in the Forum*, p. 23

As you work through this section, make a list of the differences between 'state-sponsored' and 'professional' armies. What do you think are the benefits and disadvantages of each to the soldiers themselves and to those in command of the armies?

ACTIVITY

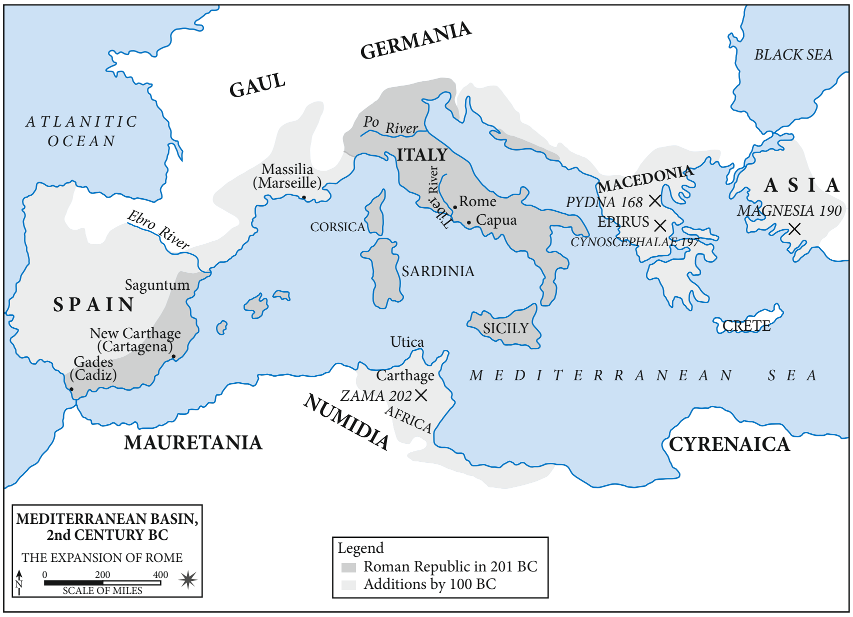
Write a speech to be given to the people by Marius attempting to recruit them to his army.

IDEALISM AND PERSONAL AMBITION

The changes brought by the expansion of Roman territory from the 4th to the 2nd centuries included significant developments in the way in which the state was governed. 133 has been identified as a key point in which the questioning of *how to rule* Rome and its state was being brought to the political table. Conquest had meant social and economic upheaval, and questions of individual rights and the duty of the state emerged to challenge traditions based on duty to the state.

It would be a mistake perhaps to assume a new political populist idealism based on philanthropy, or demands for land reflecting a revolution all ready to break out. What was real was a change in the needs of an increasingly redistributed demographic within Italy. The threat Tiberius Gracchus posed to the status quo was genuine for a more conservative senate, but that does not clarify the *intentions* of such individuals. The perceived threat to the existing constitution encouraged political division and was to form the background to an increasingly defensive conservative faction of political figures in the first century, whose suspicion of the motives of individuals such as Julius Caesar was ultimately to feed civil war.

FIGURE 2.5
The expansion of Rome in the 2nd century BC.


GERMANIA
BLACK SEA
GAUL
ATLANITIC OCEAN
Po River
ITALY
Massilia (Marseille)
Tiber River
Rome
Capua
MACEDONIA
PYDNA 168
EPIRUS
CYNOSCEPHALAE 197
ASIA
MAGNESIA 190
CORSICA
SARDINIA
Ebro River
Saguntum
SPAIN
New Carthage (Cartagena)
Gades (Cadiz)
SICILY
CRETE
Utica
Carthage
ZAMA 202
AFRICA
NUMIDIA
MAURETANIA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
CYRENAICA
MEDITERRANEAN BASIN, 2nd CENTURY BC
THE EXPANSION OF ROME
0
200
400
SCALE OF MILES
N
Legend
Roman Republic in 201 BC
Additions by 100 BC

TOPIC REVIEW

These questions should draw on your knowledge of the whole topic, so think carefully about the different things you have learned (check the Topic Overview on p. 101).

1. How does Roman society compare to 'class societies' of today?
2. How many different offices of state could a Roman have been elected to during his lifetime?
3. Magistracies on the cursus honorum held responsibility for different aspects of government, so that a consul would have already accumulated broad political experience. How similar is that to government today (you may focus on any country)?
4. With its system of patrons and clients, do you think that networking was more important to Romans than to modern society?

Further Reading

Beard, M. (2015), *SPQR. A History of Ancient Rome*, Profile Books, Chs. 5–6.
Bradley, P. (1990), *Ancient Rome. Using Evidence*, Cambridge University Press, Chs. 13–15.
Brunt, P. A. (1971), *Social Conflicts in the Roman Republic*, W.W. Norton & Co., Chs. 1–5.
Crawford, M. (1992), *The Roman Republic*, 2nd Edition, Fontana Press, Chs. 1–13.
Marin, P. (2009), *Blood in the Forum: The Struggle for the Roman Republic*, Bloomsbury Academic.
Scullard, H. H. (1982), *From the Gracchi to Nero*, 5th Edition, Routledge, Chs. 1–4.
Seager, R. (ed.) and R. Warner (trans.) (2006), *Fall of the Roman Republic*, Penguin, Chs. 1–2 (translations of Plutarch's *Life of Marius* and *Life of Sulla*).
Shotter, D. (2005), *The Fall of the Roman Republic*, 2nd Edition, Routledge, Chs. 1–3.
Steel, C. (2013), *The End of the Roman Republic*, Edinburgh University Press.
Syme, R. (1939), *The Roman Revolution*, Oxford University Press, Ch. 2.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

It has been said that Roman voters could not bring themselves to elect a man whose family had long been associated with major events in the history of the Roman Republic.

1. a. What was a 'novus homo'? [1]
   b. Name a 'novus homo'? [1]
2. 'Outside of the senate, the people of Rome were politically powerless'. Discuss. You may use your knowledge of Roman politics and social hierarchy as a starting point and should justify your response. [20]

2.2 Cato and the Politics of the *Optimates*

TOPIC OVERVIEW

- The influence of Stoic philosophy on Cato's political life
- Cato's allegiance to the *optimates* or *boni* and how this position affected his legal and political activities
- His relationships with other political figures, including Cicero, Caesar and Publius Clodius Pulcher, and reasons for these
- His idealism compared to more pragmatic approaches to politics
- His significance as a conservative in a changing political world

There are no prescribed sources for this topic, but students are encouraged to draw on any other appropriate sources and evidence they have studied in the extended-response exam questions. Here are some suggestions

CW

- Plutarch, *Life of Cato the Younger*
- Lucan, *The Civil War (Pharsalia)* Book II: 286–391
- Seneca, Essays – *De Providentia* (On Providence), *De Constantia* (On Firmness), *De Ira* (On Anger) and *De Clementia* (On Mercy).

Cato the Younger was to stand as the voice of Roman traditionalists and later to act as a leading figure among the optimates. Uncompromising in his conservative beliefs about the central role of the nobiles and the senate, he rose to become a formidable and outspoken political figure, who took every opportunity to thwart what he perceived to be the unacceptable face of personal ambition embodied by populist individuals.

KEY INDIVIDUAL

Marcus Porcius Cato Uticensis (Cato the Younger)

Date: 95–46

Roman statesman

Cato the Younger was born into a noble plebeian family in Rome. He was to serve as quaestor, tribune and praetor, and never failed to strive to preserve the traditional order of the Roman state, championing the optimate cause. He committed suicide following the defeat of his army against Caesar at Thapsus.

FIGURE 2.6
Portrait bust of Cato.

THE INFLUENCE OF STOIC PHILOSOPHY

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

> His [Cato's] death symbolised the death of the Republic, which he had loyally if short-sightedly sought to uphold with unbridled vigour all his life: under the Principate [i.e. the Empire] he was idealised as a martyr of Republican liberty and a paragon of Stoic virtues.
>
> H. H. Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero*, p. 141

When you have studied this topic, consider the evidence for idealising Cato as both 'a martyr of Republican liberty' and as 'a paragon of Stoic virtues'. What counter-arguments could you raise?

Originally expounded by the Greek philosopher Zeno in the 3rd century BC, Stoicism provided a philosophy that took hold in Rome in the 2nd century after the conquest of Greece and the advent of a huge wave of Roman interest in all ideas Hellenic. The arrival in Rome of the Stoic Panaetius of Rhodes in the second half of the 2nd century, in particular, was to influence many educated Romans. Ideas of Stoicism were adapted to fit the context of time and place. Of interest to the Romans was Zeno's advocation of knowledge, free will and moral rectitude, with self-control over one's emotions: hardship was to be endured; fortune, pleasure and pain were to be risen above. While Zeno had urged removal from public and political life, however, some Romans interpreted it as the perfect marriage with political duty to the state, with its moral nature lending itself well to an interpretation of ancient Roman values of manliness, wisdom, rationality and duty.

While some modern scholars dismiss the authenticity of his Stoic ethics, there is no doubt that Cato identified himself with tenets of Stoicism, albeit a Romanised version, and followed a strict code of conduct in his private and public life that stood out in a period notorious for its pragmatic and chaotic politics.

Most famous of Cato's forefathers was his great-grandfather Marcus Porcius Cato the Elder (234–149). Cato the Elder lived a life famously devoted to austere and morally upright living, both a landowner and renowned soldier who climbed each rung of the cursus honorum to become consul in 195 and censor in 184. Central to his political belief was a duty to preserve Rome's culturally defining ancestral customs. According to Plutarch (see Explore Further opposite), Cato the Younger is alleged to have lived, like his great-grandfather, extremely frugally, learning to tolerate harsh physical conditions and studying hard. He married a noblewoman named Atilia, with whom he had two children, then divorced her for rumoured adultery. He later married another noblewoman – Marcia – who was of excellent reputation and also bore him two children. Offered as a story demonstrating Cato's strong sense of unemotional reasoning and his loyalty to amicitia, Plutarch recounts how Cato, despite his fondness for Marcia, handed her over to his close optimate friend Hortensius whose marriage had remained childless, but who wished to have children. After Hortensius' death, Marcia returned to live with Cato.

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

> As for the tenets of the Stoics, they could support doctrines quite distasteful to Roman Republicans, namely monarchy or the brotherhood of man. The Stoic teaching indeed was nothing more than a corroboration and theoretical defence of certain traditional values of the governing class in an aristocratic and Republican state.
>
> R. Syme, *The Roman Revolution*, p. 57

Here Syme is underlining the eclectic attitude of the Romans towards imported or new ideas; that is to say that Stoicism was not an ideology adopted in its entirety, but cherry-picked to offer a moral 'Roman' ideal.

One of the challenges to an examination of political ideologies of this period lies in trying to pin down clear political 'philosophies'. As you study this topic, try to identify aspects of Cato's life that appear to belong to a Roman 'Stoic' philosophy, and look also for examples of behaviour that do not.

How useful to us are categories such as 'Stoic' or 'populist' when discussing politics in the late Roman Republic?

EXPLORE FURTHER

Plutarch was a Greek biographer and essayist who lived from AD 46–120. In his *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*, he included a biography of Cato the Younger, which offers us much interesting material about Cato. As an historical source, however, we need to be wary that it was created to illustrate the moral characters of famous Greek and Roman men – their virtues and failures.

What do you think might be the benefits and difficulties raised by such a source in any historical enquiry?

A Stoic philosophical bent clearly appears to have informed much of Cato's decision-making. Unmoved by emotive arguments he attempted always to stick to his principles and political idealism, even if they may not have been in his own personal interest.

When Cato successfully ran for the office of military tribune in the elections of 68, he was said to have been the only candidate who did not resort to bribery of the electorate – a form of political corruption that was rife in Republican Rome. In Cato's Stoic eyes bribery demonstrated an immoral lack of respect for the constitution and reflected a lack of self-belief and determination in winning an office through skill and being the best candidate. As a military tribune in Macedon in 67, despite being in command of the legion, Cato was famed for spurning the option of more luxurious lifestyle and living among his men on an equal footing, sharing the same food, work and quarters. As a commander he led from the front and, renowned for his extreme discipline and expectations, was followed by a loyal legion.

Later in 63, he supported the prosecution of the successful consular candidate Lucius Licinius Murena on the grounds of excessive bribery. Unfortunately for Cato, Murena was defended by the greatest orator of the age – Cicero – who won the case for Murena on the grounds that the threat posed to the state at that very time meant that this was not the time or place to depose the consul elected for 62. While acknowledging Cato's family nobility, his oratorical ability and his utter integrity, Cicero also had gently mocked the extreme nature of Cato's Stoicism. In 60, Cato proposed and had passed two decrees in an attempt to deal with agents of bribery. By 51, however, Cato's own candidature for consulship is said to have failed primarily because of his adamant refusal to adopt this corrupt but commonplace practice.

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

> Plutarch records that Cato's defeat [in his campaign for the consulship] was due to exasperation of the common folk, who were angry at his aloofness and refused to partake in the usual bribery that surrounded elections. […] Cato believed that he had given offence to the people but he would not, however, change himself to accommodate them, and would not seek the consulship further. While the people might have applauded Cato for his moral integrity … this did not translate to votes for his consulship.
>
> P. Marin, *Blood in the Forum*, p. 144

Do you consider Cato's refusal to resort to bribery a political mistake?

This observation by Marin illustrates well the key criticism commentators of the period, both ancient and modern, have made of Cato. His stubborn determination to be true to his principles, regardless of the circumstances, was to result at times in failure both to achieve important positions of influence and power himself and to ensure that other key figures such as Julius Caesar – hostile to Cato's political aims – were not empowered to fulfil their own ambitions.

KEY INDIVIDUAL

Marcus Tullius Cicero

Date: 106–43

Roman statesman and orator

Born in Arpinum to equestrian parents, Cicero received a traditional education in rhetoric, oratory and law before successfully climbing the cursus honorum. Despite being a novus homo, he became consul in 63 and was named *parens patriae* ('Father of the Fatherland') by Cato for his role in thwarting a major conspiracy against the government.

CATO'S ALLEGIANCE TO THE OPTIMATES

Towards the end of the 60s in Rome, Cato had become increasingly prominent in voicing the opinions of a group of powerful optimates. Bound by closely knit ties of amicitia, the optimates were politically conservative, embracing long-lived traditional policies and practice. By the time of Cato in the 1st century BC, however, the terminology was already questionable: what did it mean to be an optimate when the political system was itself being attacked by wealthy and established individuals? Three important factors

EXPLORE FURTHER

For Cato's positioning within the optimates at Rome, read Syme, Ch. 2 'The Roman Oligarchy'. He defines the optimates as 'linked by ties of kinship and reciprocal interest' (p. 22), and has earlier noted also that 'marriage with a well-connected heiress … became an act of policy and an alliance of powers, more important than a magistracy, more binding than any compact of oath or interest' (p. 12). The scale, intricacy and value of bonds of amicitia at this time cannot be overestimated.

How much of an optimate 'insider' was Cato? When you have studied Cicero, you may want to also explore how much of an 'outsider' he was.

drove Cato to champion the optimate cause: firstly, Cato came from a noble family and furthered his established status carefully through amicitia of marriage and political support; secondly, the ideal of duty to, and preservation of, the established state appealed to his Stoic beliefs; and thirdly, optimates formed opposition to populares who to Cato embodied dangerous revolution.

Cato was the optimates' most dangerous weapon when confronting the rise of individuals who were prepared to gain power through unconventional means. The unequivocal and principled stances he took up from the second half of the 60s demonstrate the point.

Following on from anti-bribery bills in 63, Cato was to play a pivotal role in concluding an event that had, according to Cicero, threatened the Roman world with annihilation, namely a conspiracy led by a man of patrician lineage – Lucius Sergius Catilina ('Catiline') – to overthrow the senate (see pp. 140–141). The plot had been revealed by Cicero during his consulship, and the conspirators had been arrested. On 5 December, the senate debated whether the conspirators should be considered for capital punishment; it had failed to reach a conclusion as the conspirators were Roman citizens who could not, by Roman law, be put to death. According to the contemporary Roman historian Sallust, the majority of the senate shared the opinion that capital punishment was not an acceptable punishment. Cato got up and spoke so eloquently and with such authority and conviction that the senate was moved to almost complete agreement: attempted treason was the same as treason itself – the men should be put to death. The motion was passed.

In 62 Cato held the office of tribune. Modern historians have sometimes queried why Cato, a leader of the optimate cause, decided to run for a non-compulsory magistracy with its notorious association with perceived radicals like Tiberius Gracchus (see pp. 106–107). Curtailed by Sulla, the powers of the tribunate had been restored by Pompey and Crassus as consuls of 70, and tribunes through the 60s had agitated the ruling elite through a series of extortion and bribery trials and even vetoing triumphs. One modern scholar identifies three good reasons for Cato's decision:

> family tradition on both the paternal and maternal side, a desire to curry popular favour, and finally, the very real power that the tribunate carried.
>
> (P. Marin, p. 99)

Cato's great-uncle had been military tribune in 122 and, with senatorial backing, had presented bills to undermine the politics of Gaius Gracchus – Tiberius Gracchus' similarly politically active younger brother. Cato's uncle also had stood as tribune of the plebs in 91 BC. Cato the Younger used his position as tribune to improve the economic position for the people of Rome, by introducing a law reducing the price of grain and extending the corn dole to double the original eligible group. He took care, however, to put the proposal before the senate first rather than taking it straight to the popular assemblies, demonstrating how the office ought to work, as well as showing the senate to be sympathetic to the current hardships of the urban poor. Only those of plebeian status could hold the office of tribune, precluding patricians such as Julius Caesar and offering Cato a good opportunity to establish his public standing and influence. In short, despite its popularis associations, Cato held the position of tribune to enhance his status and power and used it as a force to strengthen the status quo of the political and social structures, extending the traditional role of patronage.

To understand Cato's allegiance to the optimates and his conduct during the civil war that was to break out in 49, one must consider his relationships with both the great military commander Pompey and with Julius Caesar.

ACTIVITY

Research the following five tribunes and identify the way they had a significant impact as tribunes on the development of Republican politics over this period:

1. Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus
2. Aulus Gabinius
3. Gaius Manilius
4. Publius Clodius Pulcher
5. Gaius Scribonius Curio

FIGURE 2.7
Pompey the Great.

KEY INDIVIDUALS

Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus ('Pompey the Great')

Date: 106–48

Roman general and statesman

Pompey established his military prowess in the late 80s, removing those who had opposed Sulla. Consul in 70, he was to become one of the **First Triumvirate**, but he later led the Republican cause against Julius Caesar in the civil war of the early 40s.

Gaius Julius Caesar

Date: 100–44

Roman statesman, military commander and author

Julius Caesar was a patrician who traced his lineage back to the legendary Trojan Aeneas, son of Venus. He held many posts of political power and religious authority. A member of the First Triumvirate, Caesar spent ten years as a successful military commander subduing Gaul and went on to lead Rome into civil war in 49. He was stabbed to death in the senate house on 15 March 44.

First Triumvirate a private alliance formed in 60 between Julius Caesar, Pompey the Great and Marcus Licinius Crassus enabling each of the three men to achieve their personal political short-term goals. It lasted until Crassus' death in 53

As could be expected, the optimate Cato held Pompey in great suspicion from the outset. A man who showed no consideration for the established order of the cursus honorum, but succeeded through his military prestige to be awarded the consulship in 70, Pompey was the darling of the Roman people. In 67 the tribune Aulus Gabinius successfully proposed Pompey be awarded imperium to rid the Mediterranean of pirates, stabilising the increasingly problematic corn supply to Rome, which Pompey completed within three months. Following this major triumph, Pompey was again awarded imperium in 66 (proposed by another tribune Gaius Manilius) – this time successfully to defeat Mithridates and his forces in the East, replacing the optimate Lucius Licinius Lucullus who had been struggling for years to conclude the situation. Each success raised Pompey's reputation higher in the eyes of the people back in Rome. Optimate suspicion of Pompey was corroborated by each success as it was clear that the urban masses had been instrumental in the appointment of Pompey's imperium through the tribunes. When a fellow-tribune – Nepos – proposed Pompey be recalled to Rome to help 'clean up' any remaining Catiline supporters after 63, Cato did everything he could to prevent Nepos from speaking. Such a popular and militarily powerful individual as Pompey was not welcome.

In 60 Cato and the optimates decisively showed their lack of support for Pompey. Back in Rome, Pompey had submitted two important and reasonable requests to the senate. First, he wished for land to be allocated to his long-serving veterans; second, he needed the treaties he had agreed in the East to be ratified to ensure ongoing stability. The senate rejected both. It must have been a bitter blow to Pompey. The optimates had closed ranks and Pompey was not to be accepted.

Despite taking a principled stand against Pompey at every opportunity, Cato was to support the proposal that Pompey should stand as sole consul in 52. This could be seen as a key moment of pragmatism on Cato's part, as it naturally went against all his convictions about following the letter of the Roman law. The previous year had been one of political turmoil: Crassus had been killed in battle while on campaign in Parthia, and Pompey's wife Julia (the daughter of Julius Caesar) had also died, weakening the bond of the remaining two men of the First Triumvirate. No consuls had been elected, and so the year 52 saw the senate giving Pompey proconsular imperium, in a state of declared martial law. As a gesture of amicitia, Pompey suggested Julius Caesar be allowed to stand as consul in absence. Legislation was proposed, supported by Cato, to make Pompey (temporary and otherwise completely unconstitutional) sole consul instead, and it was passed. In the eyes of the optimates, Pompey was the lesser of two evils, and at least present in Rome.

Over the next two years, Caesar's lengthy campaign in Gaul finally drew to a successful conclusion and the triumphant general planted a tribune – Gaius Scribonius Curio – to act on his behalf in Rome in 50. The antagonism between optimates and Caesar (in his absence) grew, and Caesar's thwarted hopes for recognition and continued imperium came to a head on 1 December 50, when Curio's proposal to the senate that both Caesar and Pompey should hand over their imperium was vetoed by Cato and the optimates despite a majority vote in favour (370 to 22, where the 22 were made up of optimates hostile to Caesar). Civil war seemed inevitable. The next day Pompey was offered the extraordinary imperium over all the armies in Italy to protect the Republic. Pompey was being forced to choose between his alliance with Caesar and militarily championing the optimate cause, with tradition and the Roman Republic on his side.

When civil war finally broke out in 49, Cato and the optimates followed Pompey – a man they had opposed for decades. This is partly due to the complexity of Pompey's own status and career. The fact that Cato and the optimates supported Pompey in the civil war, however, is not so paradoxical if we recognise the revolution that had occurred in the decades leading up to it. It would be more accurate to say that the old, Republican terminology no longer held the same currency. The concept of 'the optimates' as a political faction had died and politicians were obliged to choose between two powerful individuals outside of the optimate cause – Caesar or Pompey.

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

> His [Pompey's] career embodied everything that the oligarchy opposed and yet they were responsible for granting him many of his exceptional appointments. He was a catalyst in the breakdown of the republic, and yet his friendship was eagerly sought by the conservative Cicero and he died in 48 leading the republicans. His whole career was a paradox.
>
> P. Bradley, *Ancient Rome,* p. 365

The figure of Pompey defies categorisation in so many ways. To what extent do you think this is unique to Pompey, and to what extent is this an inevitable consequence of the times?

EXPLORE FURTHER

Research the following optimate contemporaries of Cato. What made them powerful and how were some of them tied by bonds of amicitia to Cato?

- Quintus Hortensius (consul 69)
- Quintus Lutatius Catulus (consul 78)
- ANY Quintus Caecilius Metellus or other significant member of the Metelli family
- Lucius Licinius Lucullus (consul 74)
- Marcus Calpurnius Bibulus (consul 59)

CATO'S POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS

(i) Cicero

Not all of Cato's political relationships were dictated by optimate loyalties. As we have seen, Cato was fervent in his refusal of amicitia with those whom he believed did not uphold the established and constitutional Republican values of behaviour. As a devout servant of the state, Cato recognised individuals with sympathetic principles. One such figure was Marcus Tullius Cicero (see p. 114). Cicero often embraced conservative political values, seeing himself as a defender of the Republic, loyal to Republican tradition. His approach towards the political events of the 1st century, however, were far more pragmatic than those of Cato. As a novus homo, Cicero aspired on behalf of his descendants to enter the world of the nobiles. Conversely, figures such as Cato acknowledged Cicero's conservative political ideals, as well as his oratorical brilliance and ability to make a significant impact on all spheres of public life, but his lack of a noble background would always render him socially (and so politically) inferior. Cato had stood firmly, if unsuccessfully, against Cicero in the trial of Murena in 63, and later in 50 had been one of the few men in the senate to refuse to agree to Cicero being granted public honour in recognition of his services as governor of Cilicia. Polite in public, Cicero wrote to his close friend Atticus that he was furious about Cato's behaviour and that while he had praised Cicero for his 'rectitude, equity, clemency and good faith', he had refused Cicero's request (*Letter to Atticus*, 7.2.7). Despite this, Cato had pursued a principled stand against the conspirators of Catiline in 63 and was later to fight on the same side as Cicero in the civil war of the early 40s. It is clear that Cicero's own respect for Cato remained untarnished after his death, as in the summer of 46 he composed a eulogy in praise of Cato, the first of many to be written by a number of people for such an upstanding Republican statesman.

(ii) Clodius

Clodius has been seen traditionally by historians as acting in clear antipathy towards Cato and vice versa. In many ways, Clodius' record of public behaviour rendered him an obvious antagonist to any Roman Stoic: he was rumoured to have both started a mutiny in Syria in 66 during the third war against Mithridates and having had incestuous relations with his sister, wife of the optimate Lucius Licinius Lucullus. In 62, he committed sacrilege by dressing up as a woman to infiltrate the women-only festival of the Bona Dea; he was also alleged to have been having an affair with Julius Caesar's wife who, as wife of the **pontifex maximus**, was hosting the festival in her house. Despite clear evidence and the fact that Cicero had broken his alibi, Clodius (bankrolled by Crassus) was found not guilty and acquitted by a jury that had been bribed in his favour. In 59 Clodius had himself adopted into the plebeian order, aided by Caesar in his official position as pontifex maximus; now 'Clodius' rather than Claudius, he was able to stand as tribune. As a result of this, in 58 Clodius came to really flex his political muscles against the disapproving Cato, sending him to Cyprus to complete the annexation of this territory that was to become part of Rome's province of Cilicia and (some might argue) to support the triumvirate by keeping Cato out of the political arena at Rome.

KEY INDIVIDUAL

Publius Clodius Pulcher

Date: 93–52

Tribune of the plebs in 58

From a noble patrician background, Clodius is best known for his populist politics in the 50s. As tribune of the plebs in 58, he passed legislation which gave him huge popular support among the urban masses and enabled him to rule the streets of Rome through gang warfare. He was killed in 52 by Milo, his rival gang leader.

pontifex maximus the most influential office in ancient Roman religion; chief priest in the College of Pontiffs whose members were the highest ranking priests in the state

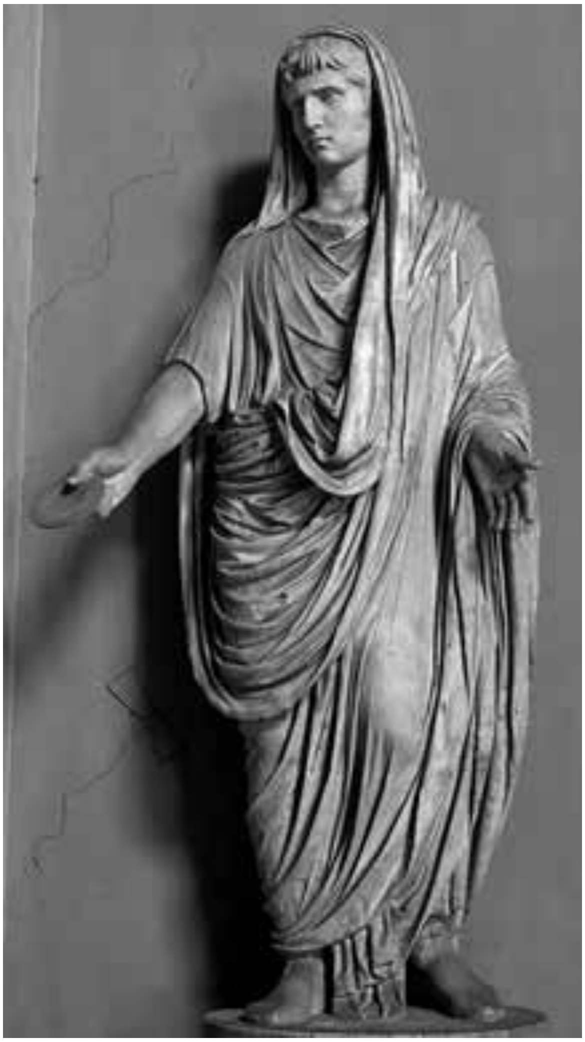


FIGURE 2.8
Later emperors (like Augustus here) were portrayed in the attire of a pontifex maximus.

DEBATE

Clodius and Cato

While the relationship between Clodius and Cato has traditionally been viewed as entirely negative (see, for example, Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero*, p. 121), some historians have been reappraising the primarily Ciceronian sources and seeing the possibility of a quite different reality. Marin, pp. 120–125, has argued convincingly that Clodius was not in the sway of the triumvirate and acted far more independently of them than has previously been believed. She also notes that despite sporadic antagonism between the two, Clodius did not seem to hold any long-term grudge against Cato who, for example, was not identified as a target of Clodius' gang in Rome in the 50s. She argues also that the office selected for him in Cyprus may well have been welcomed by Cato who had no official magistracy in Rome in 58, and would have seen it as an opportunity to shine as it demanded his administrative excellence and would confer great influence on his position on his return to Rome.

(iii) Julius Caesar

In 60 Julius Caesar asked the senate for two things – a military triumph in recognition of his successful subjugation of Gaul and the right to campaign as consul in absence since he could not, while holding military imperium, set foot in Rome to stand for election. Cato and the optimates refused the latter, perhaps in the hope that Caesar would not be able to resist choosing the triumph and abandon his hope to achieve the consulship. Caesar instead forwent the triumph and entered Rome to campaign for the consulship, and Cato and the optimates put all their support into a rival candidate – Cato's son-in-law Marcus Calpurnius Bibulus (see p. 126).

The period from 59 to 49 was peppered with events demonstrating Cato's hostility towards Caesar, from threats of prosecution for illegal behaviour on campaign to influencing the senate not to agree to Caesar's requests. When civil war broke out, Cato led the optimates to follow Pompey rather than Caesar.

On hearing the news of the defeat of the Republican forces at Thapsus in April 46, Cato realised the resistance to Caesar was effectively over. Refusing to submit to Caesar's rule – a tyranny that Cato believed had been illegally acquired through the instigation of civil war – Cato committed suicide. In seeming response to Cicero's eulogy of Cato, Caesar too produced a pamphlet after Cato's death – an *Anti-Cato* – which was received as a cruel and vindictive piece of writing, reflecting Caesar's long-standing deep anger and frustration with Cato.

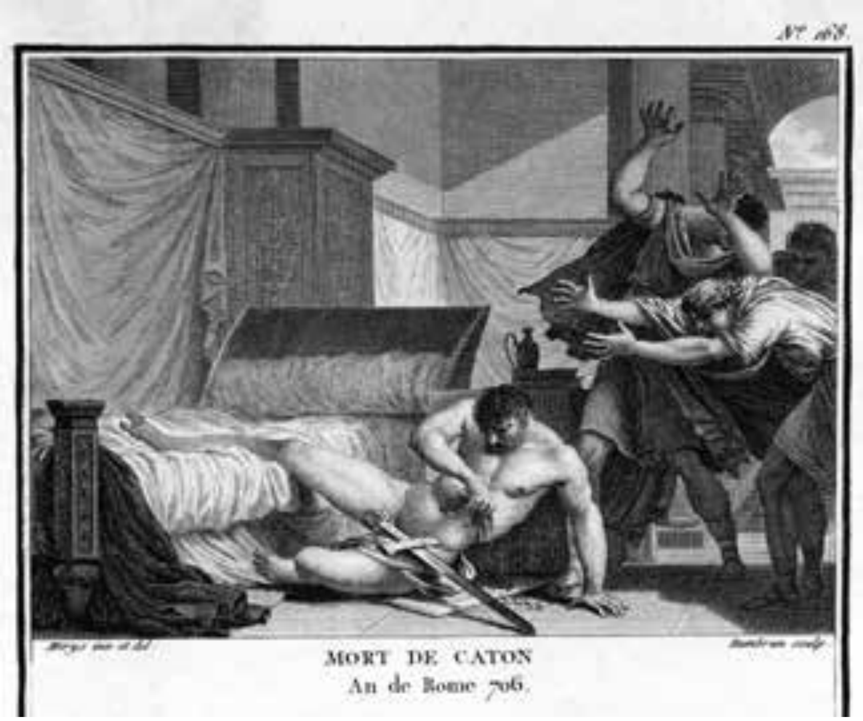

Nº 68.
MORT DE CATON
An de Rome 706.

FIGURE 2.9
The suicide of Cato, shown in a French engraving.

EXPLORE FURTHER

Read Plutarch's description of Cato's suicide in his biography of 'Cato the Younger' (suggested translation by Arthur Hugh Clough (2015) or freely available on the Internet at http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0014).

Why do you think Plutarch writes about it in so much detail? Does it confirm your image of Cato's behaviour during his lifetime?

S & C What was involved in a military 'triumph' in Rome? Why do you think Julius Caesar requested one? What did he stand to gain? Do you think it was unfair that the senate refused to grant him one?

IDEALISM AND CONSERVATIVE POLITICS IN THE LATE ROMAN REPUBLIC

Cicero himself, as a traditionalist and sympathiser, perceived Cato as clinging to unrealistic principles:

> With the best of intentions and highest regard for the republic, he acts as though he lives in Plato's republic rather than the sewers of Rome.
>
> *Letter to Atticus* II.1

As we have seen, Cato was unafraid, to say the least, of antagonising those whom he considered to have behaved unacceptably. Consistently stalwart in illustrating his Republican ideals through his own lifestyle and decisions, Cato was to be known forever after he died as a paragon of principled behaviour.

Criticism of course can be made of his extreme and inflexible standards. Acting in defiance of a turbulent period of political revolution, Cato sometimes perhaps failed to further his cause through a lack of compromise, seen in his attitude towards all requests to the senate from individuals whom he perceived to be self-seeking such as Pompey and Caesar in the 60s. The contest may have begun as one between optimates and populares, but as events passed, one could argue that Cato should have considered replacing his dogmatic approach with a more pragmatic one. We saw a glimpse of such recognition in his decision to support the motion for making Pompey temporary sole consul in 52.

Cato's suicide in 46 was in so many ways true to his strongly held Stoic principles. His 'noble death' itself was to be his final Stoic act, asserting his personal freedom from even the prospect of tyranny. The rise and fall of Cato exemplifies the disintegration not only of an optimate faction struggling to preserve the ruling right of an oligarchy that had successfully reigned for centuries, but the crumbling of the Roman Republic as a whole. Cato did, however, represent an extreme position, and while not alone in his love for the Roman Republic of old, his inability to recognise the changing political landscape blinded him to alternative courses of action and in part led him to exacerbate the situation he was trying to ameliorate. His dogmatic determination to prevent Crassus, Pompey and Caesar gain any ground in their ongoing individual ambition, particularly in cases they had brought constitutionally to the senate, inevitably served to push them together in their alienation and to form an agreement which signalled the end of the Roman Republic – the so-called First Triumvirate.

TOPIC REVIEW

These questions should draw on your knowledge of the whole topic, so think carefully about the different things you have learned (check the Topic Overview on p. 111).

1. What influenced Cato's political beliefs?
2. Do you think Cato was actually as ambitious as the popularis individuals he fought against politically?
3. Identify two actions in Cato's political life – one which you consider to be a significant success, the other a significant failure. Explain why you have chosen these two actions.

Further Reading

Bradley, P. (1990), *Ancient Rome. Using Evidence*, Cambridge University Press, Ch. 17.
Marin, P. (2000), *Blood in the Forum: The Struggle for the Roman Republic*, Bloomsbury Academic.
Plutarch. (2015), *Life of Cato*, trans. Arthur Hugh Clough *PLUTARCH*, Benediction Classics, pp. 712–743.
Scullard, H. H. (1982), *From the Gracchi to Nero. A History of Rome from 133 BC to AD 68*, 5th Edition, Routledge.
Shotter, D. *The Fall of the Roman Republic*, 2nd Edition, Routledge, Ch. 4.
Syme, R. (1939), *The Roman Revolution*, Oxford University Press, Chs. 2–3.
Tatum, W. J. (1999), *Clodius. The Patrician Tribune*, UNC Press Books.
Tatum, W. J. (2008), *Always I Am Caesar*, Wiley-Blackwell.
Tempest, K. (2011), *Cicero. Politics and Persuasion in Ancient Rome*, Bloomsbury Academic.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

The office of 'tribune of the plebs' was not a compulsory rung on the ladder of the cursus honorum, but was of key importance in the politics of the 1st century BC.

1. What was the highest position of political office that Cato held, and in what year did he serve in that office? [2]
2. Explain the potential reasons why Cato stood as tribune in 62 BC. Consider the role of the *tribune* at that time and Cato's aims and beliefs. [10]

2.3 Caesar as *Popularis* and *Dictator*

TOPIC OVERVIEW

- The reasons for, and the significance of, the 'First Triumvirate'
- Caesar's first consulship and its 'popular' programme
- The politics of the civil war and Caesar's reasons for pursuing it
- His dictatorship, 'anti-Republican' behaviour and attitude to the Republic
- His plans for 'popular' reform
- The reasons for his assassination
- His relationships with other political figures, including Cicero, Cato and Pompey, and reasons for these

There are no prescribed sources for this topic, but students are encouraged to draw on any other appropriate sources and evidence they have studied in the extended-response exam questions. Here are some suggestions

CW

- Suetonius, *The Deified Julius*
- Plutarch, *Life of Caesar*
- M. Grant, *Cicero. Selected Letters* (Penguin, 1960)

FIGURE 2.10
Julius Caesar.

Julius Caesar stands as one of the main protagonists in the fall of the Roman Republic, ending a system of government that had endured for 450 years. Often painted today as a fundamentally populist politician, just how revolutionary an individual was Julius Caesar? What motivated him? Did he hold an alternative vision for the state and for a new form of government? Had ideals of altruism towards those in need taken prominence in Roman politics? Or was Caesar simply ambitious for power himself?

THE 'FIRST TRIUMVIRATE'

Julius Caesar in many ways followed a model Roman Republican statesman's career. He became quaestor in 69, aedile in 65, praetor in 62 and consul in 59. He had also been made pontifex maximus in 63 and had governed Spain in 61. How could anybody so faithful to the Roman constitution act so radically as to bring about the formation of the First Triumvirate in 60?

This extraordinary alliance between Julius Caesar, Marcus Licinius Crassus and Pompey the Great – the First Triumvirate – has been described as the 'ultimate origin of the Civil War of 49' (Scullard, p. 118). Caesar was the key driving force behind the alliance – Pompey and Crassus had not always been on friendly terms. The term 'First Triumvirate' was coined retrospectively: it had no official recognition, but functioned instead as a powerful, political amicitia. To understand Caesar's reasons for championing it, we need to look at the years leading up to it.

The alliance of Caesar, Crassus and Pompey was formed to counteract the hostility of optimates in the senate. Caesar was perceived as an unapologetic populist, championing popular reforms while holding important offices of state. At the same time, he strengthened ties with Crassus and Pompey. Caesar was indebted to Crassus for funding his election campaigns, as well as financing splendid spectacles at Rome for the people's entertainment. Caesar had publicly supported Pompey in many of his interests, for example in the bills of 67 and 66; in 59 he married his daughter Julia to Pompey.

Pompey's requests to the senate in 60 – for land allocation for his veterans and for the ratification of his treaties with the East – had been rejected outright by the optimates. Crassus also, championing the business interest of the equites, had requested the senate's approval of a rebate for the tax farmers in Asia – a request which was again dismissed by the optimate faction in the senate. Frustration and bruised **dignitas** must inevitably have contributed to the formation of the triumvirate.

The First Triumvirate was not formed as a political coup, but as a pact or agreement to enable each of the triumvirs to fulfil their immediate political desires. United they combined the wealth of Crassus and his support from the equites, the military prestige and support of Pompey and his veterans, and the political and military prowess of Caesar and his huge popularity with the urban masses.

KEY INDIVIDUAL

Marcus Licinius Crassus
Date: 115–53
Roman general and politician
Crassus fought for Sulla in the early 1st century and gained much of his fabulous wealth through property acquisition in the years that followed, benefitting hugely from the proscriptions. He is probably best known for his role in putting down a slave revolt in 73–71 led by Spartacus.

Crassus shared the consulship with Pompey in both 70 and 55. A member of the First Triumvirate, he died in the battle of Carrhae against the Parthians in 53, who were alleged to have poured molten gold into his mouth as a symbol of his insatiable thirst for wealth.

EXPLORE FURTHER

Using the Internet, research the life of Crassus. How might the slave revolt led by Spartacus have influenced Crassus' relationship with Pompey? Why do you think it was in Crassus' interest to form an alliance with Pompey?

FIGURE 2.11
Bust of Crassus. Louvre Museum.

dignitas dignity or prestige, associated particularly with social, religious and political standing

CAESAR'S FIRST CONSULSHIP

In 59 Caesar became consul at Rome, sharing the position with the optimate conservative Marcus Calpurnius Bibulus – the son-in-law of Cato.

Caesar's most pressing concern was to placate Pompey's veteran soldiers. His approach was measured and respectful – he brought the case for land allocation before the senate for debate. Led by Cato, the optimates rejected it outright. Caesar took it to the assembly of the people for ratification, where it was passed. In the presence of the people, Caesar asked Pompey if he approved of the bill – he confirmed – and whether his veterans would defend any who sought to oppose the bill with violence – again Pompey confirmed. According to the Roman historian Cassius Dio, writing in the 2nd–3rd century AD:

> Bibulus, however, would not yield, but having gained the support of three tribunes, hindered the enactment of the law. Finally, when no other excuse for delay was any longer left him, he proclaimed a sacred period for all the remaining days of the year alike, during which the people could not legally even meet in their assembly. Caesar paid but slight attention to him and appointed a fixed day for the passage of the law. And when the populace had already occupied the Forum by night, Bibulus came up with the following he had got together and succeeded in forcing his way through to the temple of Castor, from which Caesar was delivering his speech. The men fell back before him, partly out of respect and partly because they thought he would not actually oppose them. But when he appeared above and attempted to speak in opposition to Caesar he was thrust down the steps, his fasces were broken to pieces, and the tribunes as well as others received blows and wounds... Thus the law was passed.
>
> Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 38.6.1–4

Bibulus fled to his house, where he stayed for the rest of the eight months of his consulship. He claimed that, as **augur**, he was 'watching the skies' finding unfavourable 'signs' and condemning Caesar's new laws as illegal.

augur a state religious official at Rome who could 'read' the flights of birds, interpreting them as divine favour or disapproval of major decisions of state

EXPLORE FURTHER

Many of the political individuals we are looking at also held positions of religious responsibility during this period. Julius Caesar, for example, was to become pontifex maximus in 63 and augur in 47; Cicero gained the position of augur in 53.
Explore in further depth the positions of augur and pontifex maximus in Rome in the late Republic.

- Why do you think key political players were interested in holding such titles?
- Do we have any similar cross-over today in figures of religious and political authority?

Caesar later introduced the Campanian Law, which ruled that the remaining public land of Italy (in Campania) should be divided into 20,000 pieces of land and distributed to veterans and fathers of large urban families. This meant uprooting significant numbers of rural peasantry who had been cultivating this land. It was to stand as a symbolic gesture of the importance and power of the military and the urban populace.

As a member of the triumvirate, Caesar used his position as consul to benefit Crassus and to consolidate the favour of the equites. Through a loyal tribune – Publius Vatinius – Caesar ensured that the senate agreed to adjust an agreement that had been made for contracting out the tax gathering in the province of Asia, which had proved financially unattractive for those equites responsible; the equites were requesting a rebate to recover their losses. A rebate of one-third was agreed.

Caesar legislated further to improve the lives of the provincials. He passed legislation that restricted the exploitation of the provinces by Roman governors and their staff: strict accounting was to be practised and gifts restricted. The financial benefits had long been viewed by the ruling elite at Rome as a welcome repayment for their terms in the highest offices of state in Rome. This was a further removal of favours from the nobiles, which must have been received with bitterness by the optimates.

As consul in 59, with the backing of his allies Pompey and Crassus, Julius Caesar had succeeded in establishing for himself military command of Gaul and Illyricum for five years with three legions, the rebate demanded by Crassus for the tax-farmers and both the ratification of Eastern arrangements and the passing of an agrarian bill to address the needs of Pompey's veteran soldiers. He had looked to the concerns of some of the urban poor with his land reforms, the equites with the tax-farming issues and the provincials with his legislation against mismanagement. Was this philanthropy on Caesar's part? Was he pursuing a populist ideal that elevated the rights of the poor and relatively unrepresented masses?

While the results of Caesar's actions clearly had a detrimental effect on the optimates and their political vision, we should take care in framing Caesar as either a populist by ideal or as an 'anti-optimate'. The rise of populism in politics had been firmly established by the time of the Gracchi brothers in the preceding century. The bonds between the First Triumvirate were an extension of the essential and established network of amicitia in Roman society and politics. Caesar's desire to 'help' Pompey and Crassus could also be seen as an attempt to return to them their dignitas, which had been denied them despite their significant services to the state.

THE POLITICS OF THE CIVIL WAR

When Caesar crossed the Rubicon river with his legion on 10 January 49, he effectively started civil war. He had, since 58, been located far from Rome mostly in Transalpine Gaul, away from the political centre of decision-making. From being consul in 59 and then long-serving military commander extending Rome's territory to the English Channel and the Rhine, filling the coffers and singing the military glory of the Roman state, what circumstances had brought about such revolutionary action by Caesar?

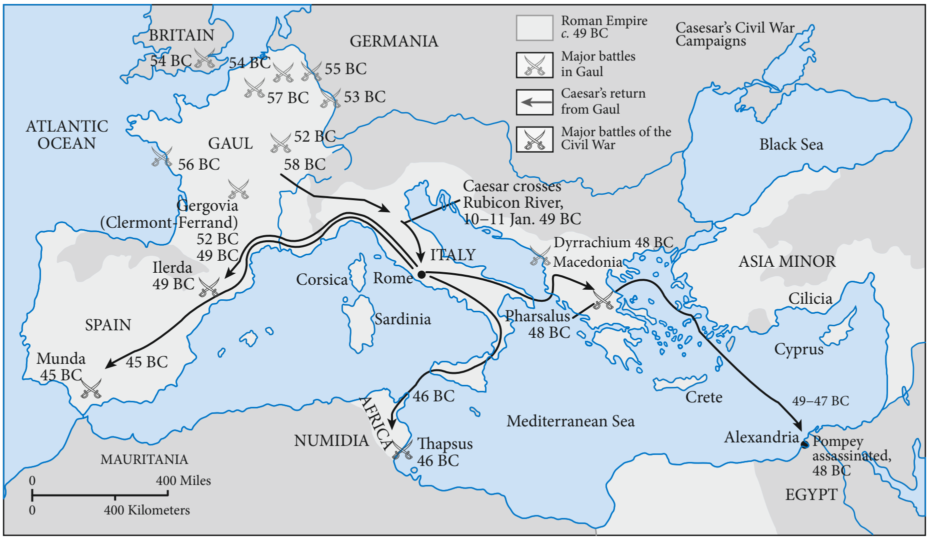

BRITAIN
54 BC
54 BC
55 BC
57 BC
53 BC
GERMANIA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
GAUL
52 BC
56 BC
58 BC
Gergovia (Clermont-Ferrand) 52 BC
Ilerda 49 BC
49 BC
SPAIN
Munda 45 BC
45 BC
Corsica
Sardinia
Rome
ITALY
Caesar crosses Rubicon River, 10–11 Jan. 49 BC
Dyrrachium 48 BC
Macedonia
Pharsalus 48 BC
ASIA MINOR
Cilicia
Cyprus
Crete
Black Sea
Mediterranean Sea
46 BC
AFRICA
NUMIDIA
Thapsus 46 BC
MAURITANIA
49–47 BC
Alexandria
Pompey assassinated, 48 BC
EGYPT
Roman Empire c. 49 BC
Major battles in Gaul
Caesar's return from Gaul
Major battles of the Civil War
Casesar's Civil War Campaigns
0 400 Miles
0 400 Kilometers

FIGURE 2.12
Map showing the key sites of the civil war.

Retrospectively, it can look both to be the revolutionary act of a deeply ambitious individual, ready to take on the state of Rome, and it can be defended as the behaviour of a man with few realistic options left.

In early 58, Caesar set out for Gaul with three legions, leaving Pompey in Rome to protect the interests of the triumvirate. In his consular year, Caesar (as pontifex maximus) and Pompey (as augur) had also enabled Publius Clodius Pulcher (see p. 119) to renounce his patrician status to be adopted into the plebeian class, enabling him to run for the tribunate. This support for Clodius no doubt was planned to secure his reciprocal support for the triumvirs, especially in Caesar's absence, to help deflect potential criticism of the illegality of Caesar's consular legislation.

In 58, Clodius managed to secure both the exile of Cicero and the temporary extraction of Cato from Rome under the official state duty of annexing Cyprus. In this way he removed the two people most likely to be hostile to the establishment of the power of the triumvirate. Clodius also lost no time in getting populist legislation of his own passed directly through the popular assembly, building a significant support base in Rome among the urban masses. The introduction of a free corn dole and his repeal of Cicero's law forbidding trade guilds and other associations enabled Clodius to mastermind the creation of gangs of supporters, which he used to intimidate potential critics of his actions.

But Clodius' personal ambition threatened the triumvirate too. Already made anxious by rumours of a possible assassination attempt on him, Pompey was then treated to public attacks by Clodius' new gangs, and he retired from public life for most of 58, staying in his home for his own safety until he rallied counter-gangs to defend himself. Gang-warfare prevailed in the streets of Rome.

Despite, or perhaps in nervous or jealous response to, Caesar's successful campaigning for Rome in Gaul, antagonistic voices were increasingly heard against the legality of his legislation in 59. This, mixed with ongoing news of the street violence, Pompey's intimidation and Clodius' rapid rise to power, must have alerted Caesar to the threat to the stability not only of the triumvirate but also his own position. In 56 Caesar arranged to meet Pompey and Crassus in Luca in central Italy and re-established their alliance, creating an arrangement that demonstrated to all opposition their renewed strength. Caesar was allocated imperium for a further five years of command in Gaul, Crassus for five years in Syria, Pompey the same for Spain. Pompey and Crassus were to share the consulship for 55, and Pompey was granted the right to hold military command over Spain in absentia, ruling through his legates: he was to stay in Rome looking after the interests of the triumvirate.

Caesar, Crassus and Pompey were undeniably in stronger positions of power by 55 than they had been in 59. It was events from 54 to 50, however, which weakened the bonds of the triumvirate and were to inform Caesar's decision in 49 to lead his army against Pompey. In 54, Caesar's daughter – Pompey's beloved wife – Julia died in childbirth, as did her baby; this weakened the formal personal ties between the two men. In 53, Crassus was killed in battle at Carrhae. By 52, street warfare had grown so bitter that the elections had failed to take place and no offices of state had been filled. Clodius was killed by his rival gang leader Milo (working for Pompey). Pompey was married again, but this time to the daughter of the conservative Quintus Metellus Scipio, demonstrating the emergence of a new bond between Pompey and the senatorial elite. The senate – led by Cato – moved to elect Pompey as sole consul for 52, and later in the year Pompey chose his new father-in-law to share the consulship. This marked a significant development in the relationship between Pompey and the optimates who had hitherto so consistently acted against the wishes of the triumvirate.

Caesar was becoming increasingly alienated by Rome. As a show of support Pompey had backed a law passed by all ten tribunes to enable Caesar to be able to stand as a candidate for the consulship in absentia, that is allowing him to stay under the protection of his proconsular imperium in Gaul until a smooth and instant transfer to another office could be secured. When then passing a new law demanding that all candidates for office must canvass in person, Pompey added a clause exempting Caesar. However, when he secured the command of Spain for a further five years for himself, he did no such thing for Caesar in Gaul: the alliance of the triumvirate had clearly deteriorated, and with Crassus dead and Caesar in Gaul, Pompey's security and relationship with the elite in Rome was becoming consolidated.

The year 51 saw the drawing to an end of Caesar's campaigning in Gaul. From a Roman perspective it had been an historic triumph, extending the territory of the state and increasing revenue significantly. But in Rome in 51, one of the consuls – Marcus Caecilius Metellus – proposed that since Caesar's campaigns were now effectively complete he should give up his imperium, and a successor to the provincial command be chosen. This was a clear threat designed to remove state protection from Caesar and have him return to Rome, allowing his enemies the opportunity to put him on trial for his laws of 59. Caesar's response to this threat was to find the support of a bankrupt tribune of 50 – Gaius Scribonius Curio – to defend his interests in his absence. Curio promptly vetoed the proposal of a debate about Caesar's removal. At the same time, news came from the East that Syria was being threatened by the Parthians and the senate moved that both Pompey and Caesar should each send a legion out to the East too. Pompey agreed, but offered a legion he had 'lent' to Caesar, with the result that Caesar would lose two legions, weakening his position further.

The matter came to a head on 1 December 50 when Curio put it to the senate that both Pompey and Caesar should give up their imperium and armies. A resounding move in favour of this – 370 votes to 22 – was vetoed: despite almost universal desperation for peace, the elite group of optimates led by Cato refused to allow Caesar to walk free. They asked Pompey to defend Rome and take command of the Roman state armies not led by Caesar and he agreed. Caesar tried to negotiate with Rome. Through Marcus Antonius – a tribune of 49 – he tried to persuade the senate to accept Curio's original suggestion of compromise, but a vote was refused. An optimate moved that Caesar should be declared a public enemy if he did not disarm by a set deadline: the motion was carried but then vetoed by Antony. In flagrant mockery of the law protecting the tribunician veto as binding, Antony was threatened and advised to leave Rome immediately: he joined Caesar and his camp in Ravenna. Caesar had two options – to return to Rome without imperium, exposing himself to his enemies, or return to Rome with his army. He chose the latter.

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

> If the technical responsibility for war rested on the shoulders of Caesar, it was clearly neither desired by him (witness his negotiations), nor by Pompey (witness his vacillations), nor by the vast majority of senators (witness their vote of 1 December), and still less by the bulk of the population of Italy who showed no enthusiasm to rise in defence of the constitution. Caesar himself perhaps put his finger on the point when, surveying the Optimate dead on the battle-field of Pharsalus, he exclaimed, 'Hoc voluerunt' [*'They wanted this'*]. It was the small optimate clique, the twenty-two senators who voted against the disarmament that forced the issue.
>
> H. H. Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero*, p. 122

Who do you think was responsible for the outbreak of civil war in 49? What did he/they stand to gain?

DICTATOR

The years 49 and 48 saw the Roman Republic succumb to civil war with Julius Caesar's forces fighting those of Pompey and the Roman senate. Caesar marched south to Rome. He found that Pompey and the senate had fled the city and travelled east to Dyrrachium (Durrës in modern-day Albania) to join forces with Roman armies in Thessalonika. Caesar followed and they fought at Dyrrachium. Unsuccessful, Caesar regrouped his forces and the two sides clashed again at Pharsalus in 48. Despite being hugely outnumbered, Caesar's armies were triumphant and Pompey fled to friends in Egypt. Unfortunately for

Pompey, he was met on the shore by an envoy of Egypt's ruler Ptolemy and was beheaded as a show of support towards Caesar.

Of the triumvirate only Caesar remained, heading a huge, loyal and experienced army. The senate had lost its leader and was camping in Dyrrachium, far from Rome. While 'Republican' armies continued to stand and fight over the following years, they were dispersed and weak: Cato himself would later commit suicide following the defeat of his army at Thapsus in North Africa in 46.

In 48 Julius Caesar became a self-proclaimed dictator. Caesar's dictatorship differed from that of Sulla (in 81). Instead of a period of horrific proscriptions, Caesar pursued a policy of clemency towards those who had fought against him in the civil wars; unlike Sulla, he also held on to the title to enable him time to build upon what he had started. It is important to recognise also that Caesar had decided to adopt a title of office that was historically Republican, legally ordained, constitutionally recognised and designed to allow him superiority and protection against tribunician veto: he was seemingly playing by Republican rules. When he changed his title in February 44 to *dictator perpetuo*

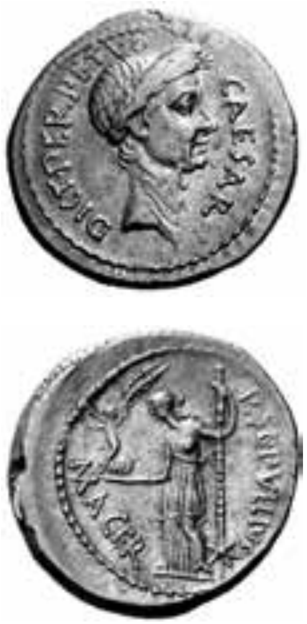


FIGURE 2.13
When he became dictator, Caesar minted coins such as this with the legend 'dictator forever'.

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

> 'The republic', Caesar is reported to have observed, 'is a mere name, without form or substance'. This could of course simply have been the contemptuous remark that it is often taken to have been, signalling that he felt free to do whatever he wished; equally, it might have meant that, in his view, there was nothing 'sacred' about the way that the government had been carried out in the early days; just as the republic's institutions had evolved to meet changing needs in the past, so they should be able to continue to do in the present and the future.
>
> D. Shotter, *The Fall of the Roman Republic*, p. 81

What did it mean to be 'Republican' at this point? When we examine other individuals who publicly claimed devout allegiance to the Republic as an ideal state, for example Cicero, it is clear that the Roman Republic of the past was in many ways hard to see: its preservation seemed now to equate to the preservation of the rights and demands of the optimates – not even the senatorial class or even the nobiles, but a small group of hard-line conservatives prepared now to sacrifice much of Republican tradition to preserve their own status. Cicero's vision of concordia ordinum (see p. 139) had been shattered, as the optimates had refused to consider proposals that would benefit the people or the equites (as they had rejected the requests of Caesar, Pompey and Crassus in the 60s) and had violated the law recognising the veto of the tribunes (with Anthony in 49); they had failed to control the city when it came under mob warfare in the 50s and failed also to recognise the nature of change that had been brought about since the expansion of Roman territories particularly since the 2nd century. Who did embody the Roman Republic in 48?

– perpetual dictator – it must have seemed to some people to have changed nature from being an acceptable emergency office designed to steer Rome through periods of crisis to a title of unchallengeable autocracy.

There is little doubt that Caesar aimed to bring peace and stability to the state. From 48 to 44, as dictator, he refilled the dwindling numbers of the senate to 900 and increased the number of magistracies annually available for election to the cursus honorum. He introduced a wide-scale building policy to improve the functioning of the city, implementing flood protection from the river Tiber, road improvements, the draining of the local marshes, improvements of the harbour at Ostia for trade and economic growth, a new basilica in the forum and indeed a whole new magnificent forum – the Forum Iulium. His building policy brought employment to many as well as improving the city and creating a visually grand capital city. In the provinces he established colonies, offering both settlements for those in need and bringing Roman stable presence to the provinces, establishing peace and improving trade and business.

Julius Caesar had been pontifex maximus since 63, augur from 47 and consul every year (except 47) including sole consul in 45: he held the key state religious and political offices, restricting outside interference with his plans and progress. Also, the new senators were his own supporters, and the popular assemblies were dominated by his wide patronage and popularity among the urban masses, the equites and the military. His building programme, ostensibly for the blessing and grandeur of the city of Rome, could not help but act as a powerful statement of his own power, achievement and impact. To many it must have seemed as though despite the veneer of tradition, Caesar's individual rise to power was unstoppable. Was he aiming at a sort of monarchy?

Some modern historians such as Scullard (see *From the Gracchi to Nero*, p. 141) have identified a turning point in the year 46 when Cato committed suicide rather than capitulate to living under Caesar's Republic. Caesar's **dominatio** over the Roman state was hard to dispute. By 45 there was a distinct and growing voice rising among the senatorial class of discontent at the now apparent autocratic nature of Caesar's power, despite the constitutional trappings of a republic.

dominatio a form of autocracy or despotism, anathema to the Roman concept of a Republican state

EXPLORE FURTHER

Think about what makes up the essential characteristics of a political constitution. Laws? Cultural values? Customs and rituals? The system for its creation/election? The people that constitute it? The building it is set in? How important is its name?

Do you think Julius Caesar was a 'statesman of the Roman Republic' in the 40s? How else might you define him politically?

CAESAR'S PLANS FOR POPULAR REFORM

There can be no doubt that Julius Caesar's success owed much to populist political decisions. It is impossible to know to what degree this may have been driven by some sense of philanthropy. What Caesar understood was that to empower the people by representing their needs and desires, he could build his own powerbase and could in turn influence the people as well as use the force of popular opinion to influence leading figures of state. Throughout his political career before the civil war he had supported popular causes, for example the measures brought in by Pompey and Crassus as consuls in 70, the lavish games he himself had laid on in Rome in his role as aedile in 65 or his promotion of Rullus' land reform in 63.

In 59, as consul, Caesar saw to it that Pompey's previously denied request for land for his veterans and Crassus' request on behalf of the equites for rebates on tax farming were agreed to and carried out. His consular legislation to regulate the accounts of provincial governors was also intended to alleviate some of the burdens of those living in the provinces: the Julian law of 59 required governors to balance their accounts and published them before leaving their posts.

Caesar also supported others who preferred to appeal to popular support rather than the traditional top-down system of government. His backing of Clodius was to mean the introduction of a free corn dole for the urban masses, as well as the reintroduction of trade guilds for skilled labourers.

As dictator, Caesar continued to introduce policies that would benefit the everyday people of Rome, improving living and working conditions for many through his building programme and benefitting many more through the employment it brought. Continuing from his recognition of the needs of Pompey's veteran soldiers in the 60s, he sought to establish colonies in the provinces for those in need of homes, establishing homes for 80,000 Romans in the provinces, encouraging both the process of Romanisation and trade.

The notion of populist politics in Rome as being primarily 'rabble-rousing' or something to be frowned upon was very much an opinion promoted by the optimates. Cicero himself – an idealist and devoted to Rome – had little patience with the idea of allowing the people at large to influence the government of state, uneducated and inexperienced as they generally were in the craft of statesmanship. The oligarchy, however, had failed even by the first quarter of the 1st century BC to acknowledge the scale of social change that had been swept in with the extension of territory the previous century. Caesar recognised that the urban masses and veteran soldiers were a feature of the demography of Rome that was there to stay.

ACTIVITY

In two groups, write and deliver out loud separate cases for Julius Caesar's actions being driven entirely by

- EITHER his love for the Roman Republic and its people
- OR selfish desire for power

Have a vote – which argument is most convincing?
Debate further the following question: what kind of historical source could we find that might ever help us decide this debate?

THE ASSASSINATION OF CAESAR

On the Ides of March 44, Caesar lay dead on the floor of the senate, stabbed multiple times by senators in broad daylight.

The assassination had been planned by a group of senators with the aim of freeing the Republic from the tyranny of Caesar's dictatorship. Caesar's relentless hold upon the key offices of state, his patronage network at all levels and perhaps in particular his decision to adopt the status of *dictator perpetuo* in February had convinced the conspirators of the desperate need for the state to be freed of this autocrat. According to Velleius Paterculus, a Roman historian (born in 19 BC and writing only decades after the event):

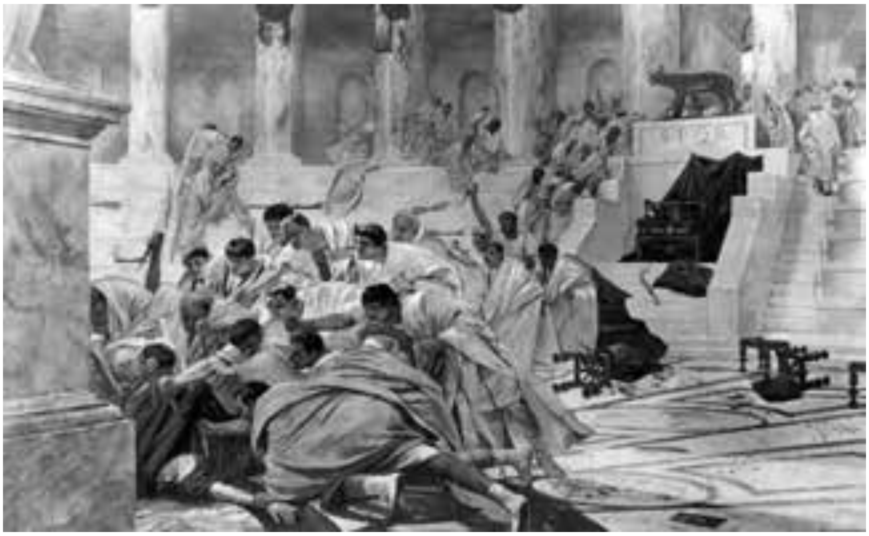
> Considerable animosity had been roused toward Caesar thanks to Mark Antony... Antony had set a royal diadem on Caesar's head as he sat before the rostra during the Lupercalia [a public religious festival held on 15 February], and though it was refused by him, the refusal was given in such a way as to suggest no offense on Caesar's part.
>
> Velleius Paterculus 2.56.3

libertas a term for liberty or the political freedom of citizens

Fear that Caesar wanted to be king of Rome had taken hold. Senators were driven by a vision of the triumph of **libertas** over dominatio. The key 'liberators' were Gaius Cassius Longinus and Marcus Junius Brutus – a relative of the celebrated Lucius Junius Brutus (one of the first consuls of Rome in 509 following the expulsion of the final king – Tarquinius Superbus). As one modern scholar points out, however:

> Of the twenty known names of the conspirators, nine had fought with Pompey, seven with Caesar, whilst the remaining four had been with Caesar in Gaul. This mixture of immediate backgrounds reflects well the nature of Caesar's problem of trying to satisfy a variety of interests between 48 and 44, as well as his failure to find an acceptable solution.
>
> D. Shotter, *The Fall of the Roman Republic*, p. 88

FIGURE 2.14
Late 19th-century print showing the death of Julius Caesar.



If the reasons for the assassins' motives were complex and various, their uniting desire for libertas was not shared by the masses, the equites or even some other members of the senatorial class (many of whom had been promoted to the senate by Caesar himself). When Caesar's death was publicly announced by Brutus, the news was received in silence and, as Cicero pointed out that April in a letter to his friend Atticus (*ad Att.* 14.4) PS, the restoration of libertas did not automatically bring with it the recovery of the Republic.

CAESAR'S POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS

To view Caesar at the end of his life – murdered as a tyrannical and populist dictator by colleagues – would be give a false impression of the range of political alliances and indeed friendships that he formed during his career.

With the formation of the First Triumvirate, Caesar became particularly close to Pompey, sealing the bond with Pompey's marriage to his daughter Julia. Caesar had his patrician heritage, oratorical skills and political presence at Rome to offer Pompey, while Pompey's military renown and consequent popularity combined to render him a key political player of the period and a strong ally. Pompey's presence in Rome while Caesar was in Gaul ensured his interests, and those of the triumvirate generally, were looked after. It can have come as little surprise to Caesar, however, when Pompey finally gave in to the immediate pressure of the optimates in Rome in December 50 and agreed to lead the senate and a 'Republican' army against Caesar. Despite the civil war, it is said that Caesar was upset about the murder of Pompey in Egypt.

Caesar's relationship with Cicero was more complex. As a champion of the Republican cause, Cicero does not seem at first to be an obvious candidate for friendship or alliance with Caesar. Nostalgic for the Roman Republic of the past, Cicero strove to create a society at peace, with each of the social orders working in harmony with each other, a group of boni running the state, with Republican laws and values respected. Caesar, however, recognised the potential power of Cicero's support. His rhetorical skills were outstanding: Cicero could persuade. Caesar did ask Cicero if he would join the triumvirate, but Cicero turned him down, disapproving of such an alliance. As the likelihood of civil war advanced, Caesar continued to seek Cicero's approval and an alliance, even coming to visit him. In 49, Cicero deliberated for nearly six months before choosing to follow Pompey, and when the war broke out and Cicero found himself in Dyrrachium, he acknowledged that there was little to choose between the two sides when it came to virtue and Republican values. When Pompey fell, Cicero returned to Italy and waited in Brundisium for a year for Caesar to return, hoping for his pardon and permission to return to Rome, which Caesar gave. In 46, after Cato had committed suicide, Cicero wrote a eulogy of him called *Cato*, to which Caesar responded by writing a work entitled *Anti-Cato*. Despite this significant dissent, Cicero and Caesar had shared a love for literature and a respect for oratorical skill that in other times might have brought them closer together. As one historian concludes:

> he [Cicero] did not hate the dictator as a man. But he did hate the fact that Caesar had no desire to restore the Republic.
>
> K. Tempest, *Cicero,* pp. 180–181

When Caesar was assassinated, Cicero had been kept ignorant of the plot, perhaps so that he was not compromised as he had been after the execution of the Catiline conspirators, or so that he did not try to talk the conspirators out of the idea. After the event, Cicero congratulated the assassins for what they had done in the name of libertas, but berated them for their lack of a plan for what to do in the wake of his death, leaving a political vacuum and a real threat in the form of Mark Antony.

Perhaps the one relationship that caused most political damage was between Caesar and Cato (see p. 121). Caesar, along with Pompey and Crassus, had become the focus of Cato's hostility and disapproval. As Cato himself grew in influence over the optimates in the senate, he made a point of rejecting all requests made by these men. When the civil war broke out in 49, Cato urged the optimates and the senate to follow Pompey against Caesar. After the defeat of the Republican army at Thapsus, principled to the end, Cato preferred to take his own life than submit to a life in Rome ruled by Caesar.

EXPLORE FURTHER

S&C

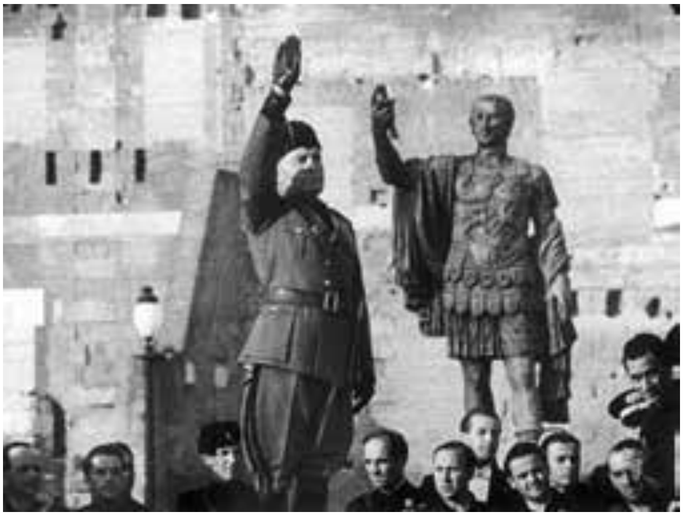
Read the opening to Caesar's account of the civil war – *Bellum Civile* (*The Civil War*) – Book 1, Chapters 1–13.

Whom does Caesar appear to blame for the civil war? How might his opponents have countered this view?

S & C

Why do you think Mussolini might have been inspired by Julius Caesar?

FIGURE 2.15
Premier Benito Mussolini, dictator of Italy, saluting the crowd in front of a statue of Julius Caesar.



TOPIC REVIEW

These questions should draw on your knowledge of the whole topic, so think carefully about the different things you have learned (check the Topic Overview on p. 124).

1. Why was the alliance of the First Triumvirate created?
2. Why is Caesar sometimes termed a *popularis* politician?
3. How consistent were Caesar's relationships with key political figures of the 1st century?

Further Reading

Bradley, P. (1990), *Ancient Rome. Using Evidence*, Cambridge University Press, Chs. 16–17.
Brunt, A. (1971), *Social Conflicts in the Roman Republic*, W.W. Norton & Co., Ch. 6.
Crawford, M. (1992), *The Roman Republic*, 2nd Edition, Fontana Press, Ch. 15.
Graves, R. (1979), *The Twelve Caesars*, Penguin, Ch. 1 'The Deified Julius'.
Marin, P. (2000), *Blood in the Forum: The Struggle for the Roman Republic*, Bloomsbury Academic, Ch. 8.
Scullard, H. H. (1982), *From the Gracchi to Nero*, 5th Edition, Routledge, Chs. 6–7.
Seager, R. (ed.) and Warner, R. (trans.) (2006), *Fall of the Roman Republic*, Penguin, Ch. 5 (translations of Plutarch's *Life of Caesar*).
Shotter, D. (2005), *The Fall of the Roman Republic*, 2nd Edition, Routledge, Ch. 6.
Syme, R. (1939), *The Roman Revolution*, Oxford University Press.
Tempest, K. (2011), *Cicero. Politics and Persuasion in Ancient Rome*, Bloomsbury Academic.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Julius Caesar in many ways followed a model Roman Republican statesman's career: he became quaestor in 69, aedile in 65, praetor in 62 and consul in 59.

1. (a) How many times did Julius Caesar hold the consulship during his lifetime? [1]
   (b) What important position of religious authority did Julius Caesar hold from 63 BC? [1]
2. 'The Civil War that broke out in 49 BC was Julius Caesar's fault.' To what extent do you agree with this statement? You may use your knowledge of the relationships between Caesar and other key political players as your starting points and should justify your response. [20]

2.4 Cicero and the *Res Publica*

TOPIC OVERVIEW

- Cicero's ideas about the ideal state and how it had developed in Rome, including:
    - the role of concordia ordinum ('the agreement of the orders')
    - the ideal state of affairs as cum dignitate otium ('peace with dignity')
    - how actions during his career can be rationalised with his political ideas
- His attempt to reconcile senators and equites in the concordia ordinum and the reasons why this failed
- Explanation of his relationships with, and attitudes toward:
    - the optimates, including Cato
    - the populares, including Clodius and Caesar
    - Pompey
    - the 'First Triumvirate'
    - Catiline
    - the provinces
    - land reform
    - The civil war between Pompey and Caesar
    - Mark Antony

The following prescribed sources are covered in this topic:

- Cicero letters, to Atticus (*Att.* 8.8); to Atticus (*Att.* 9.4)

Don't forget that you will be given credit in the exam if you study extra sources and make relevant use of them in your answers. The prescribed sources for Topics 5 and 6 are also relevant here.

We shall look at this topic in four sections:

1. Cicero's ideal Rome – looking at his political beliefs and ideals
2. Cicero, the optimates and populares – examining his early career and how his actions were influenced by his ideals
3. Cicero and the First Triumvirate – how Cicero negotiated the troubled decade of the 50s
4. Civil war and Mark Antony – Cicero's political motivation and actions in a period in which his ideal constitution had visibly been crushed by civil war and a dictatorship

CICERO'S IDEAL ROME

Cicero wished for the Roman Republic to exist in a state of **concordia ordinum**. This ideal involved maintaining a perfect status quo of a clear social order of Rome, which perhaps had never even existed in Cicero's own lifetime, but rather was a paradigm borne of conservative nostalgia. By the time of Cicero, the Gracchi brothers had extended the power of the tribunate so far that it had been deliberately squashed by Sulla later. Equites such as Marius had wielded hitherto unseen power through the creation of professional armies. Men like Pompey had been appointed dictator, with no respect for the official cursus honorum. Dictatorship and civil war had already been suffered in the early part of the century. By the time of Cicero, the 'traditional' oligarchy of the Republic had been challenged by powerful individuals, taking advantage of the social and economic change of the 2nd century. But for Cicero, concordia ordinum was an ideal that could be retrieved and re-embedded, with the right men at the helm of the ship of state.

concordia ordinum
literally, 'the agreement of the orders': a political ideal held by Cicero in which the original structures of the Republican constitution were encouraged to flourish and continue, with the aristocracy and equites united in the common good of governing the Roman state

Cicero's aim was to establish a Rome that, in response to the recent periods of conquest, civil violence and political disruption, prospered from a period and indeed future of **cum dignitate otium**. With this ideal in mind, Cicero placed great importance upon a number of qualities needed for those with responsibility for the health of the Roman state: duty, libertas, dignitas and traditional morals embodied in part by Stoic philosophy. The language of these 'values' runs throughout his written work – see, for example, the theme of libertas in his correspondence (p. 176) or Verres' failure to embrace 'Roman' values as a quasi-criminal fault (p. 162). The fact that Cicero undertook the case against Verres points also to how he projected his idealism further afield than simply in Rome itself: he was, as one modern scholar points out, raising fundamental new questions about how Rome should govern its provinces:

cum dignitate otium
literally, 'leisure with prestige': used in a wider sense by Cicero to refer to an absolute social, religious, legal and political status quo

> How was a Roman governor expected to behave in the provinces? How was his job defined? What voice were the provincial populations to have, particularly in seeking redress against misrule? And what was to count as misrule? Issues of provincial government were brought right into the very heart of domestic political debate.
>
> M. Beard, *SPQR*, pp. 255–256

It is important to be clear that while Cicero was driven by a strong intellectual and moral outlook, he was not in favour of meritocracy or democracy. He made his negative feelings towards the general populace and their inability to govern the state very clear in his philosophical treatises on politics, as well as in letters to his close friend Atticus. For Cicero the key to Rome's successful future lay in ensuring the dignitas and power of the upper classes, of ensuring both a harmony between the optimates and equites, and that only the very best, wealthy, most capable men – boni – were placed in positions of political, legal, financial and military power. Their duty as patrons of the lower orders would in turn make sure that the ruling classes would establish peace and justice.

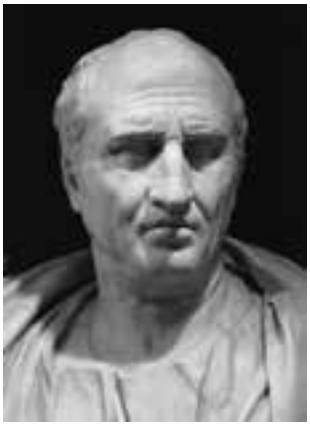


FIGURE 2.16
Portrait bust of Cicero.

CICERO, THE OPTIMATES AND POPULARES

Cicero's relationship with the optimates was central from the outset of his career. He had to convince them that he – a novus homo and member of the equites – could work alongside them while continuing to build up a significant network of amicitia at all social levels.

During his office as aedile in 69, Cicero successfully defended his first senator in court – Marcus Fonteius – against an accusation of extortion during his recent governorship in Cisalpine Gaul. Fonteius had been a senator who had protected the interests of the equites and in defending him Cicero grew his political network of supporters from both orders. The 60s were to challenge Cicero immensely in his aim for concordia ordinum. He was constantly forced to side as pragmatically as possible between rising political factions, particularly in the form of powerful individuals. As Pompey, Caesar and Crassus grew in status, optimates entrenched themselves as an uncompromising opposition, with Cicero treading a careful path between courting the optimates and individuals like Pompey, whose popularity and power Cicero could not afford to ignore.

Cicero had already alluded to the idea that the popularis Pompey – the great hero of the time – had held sympathetic views to his own in his speech against Verres in 70 (see Topic 2.5 below). In 67, however, when Cicero was campaigning for the office of praetor in Rome, he kept a low profile in the bill proposed by the tribune Aulus Gabinius to allow Pompey a special command to rid the Mediterranean of pirates – a matter which was seriously impeding the corn supply to Rome. The following year, however, Cicero was to present an entirely different face. As praetor in 66, Cicero delivered a lengthy political speech – *Pro Lege Manilia* – advocating Pompey as the ideal man to assume another extraordinary command, this time to replace the optimate Lucius Licinius Lucullus in the East who was as yet unsuccessful in concluding Rome's fight against Mithridates. A small group of optimates – men such as Hortensius and Catulus – closely supported Lucullus. Cicero had chosen to announce his support of Pompey in public, risking his own alienation from the group of men he had so assiduously supported until now. By framing his support for Pompey as an opportunity to make Rome safe and to secure her finances, he appealed widely to the equites and of course the people, without appearing revolutionary and all the while praising Lucullus' efforts highly. The Manilian Law was passed and Pompey was granted imperium to fight in the East. With one eye on the consulship ahead, Cicero was taking a carefully considered direction that Cato, for example, would never have contemplated: to promote his own position and enable him to reach the consulship and thus influence the course of politics, Cicero was willing to take a long-term pragmatic approach to politics to achieve his ideal. Cicero needed the votes and had waited to time his support for Pompey perfectly.

Cicero's year as consul was to test both his principles and his bonds of optimate amicitia greatly. On his first day of office – 1 January 63 – Cicero delivered a speech opposing a bill proposed by the tribune Publius Servilius Rullus regarding land reform. Supported behind the scenes by Caesar and Crassus and openly by all ten tribunes, this populist bill to redistribute land was an attractive prospect to the urban masses. The proposal was to create a commission of ten men for five years who would control

KEY EVENT

The conspiracy of Lucius Sergius Catilina (Catiline) – the 'Catiline Conspiracy'

Date: 64–63

Where: Rome

This was a plot led by the patrician Catiline to overthrow the consulship of Cicero in 63. Supported by disaffected Sullan veterans and some aristocratic allies, Catiline was alleged to have raised an army from the 'dregs' of the Roman urban mob, appealing to political promises of the annulment of debt. Cicero uncovered the conspiracy and delivered a bitter and effective speech to the senate 'exposing' the plans of Catiline who was present but subsequently fled Rome. Catiline later died in battle against the state army led by the consul Antony Hybrida. Some of his fellow senatorial conspirators were identified and controversially put to death without a trial.

the redistribution of land – to Cicero's mind an enviable role for a power-hungry individual. Cicero's co-consul Antonius (bankrolled by Crassus and supported by Caesar) was expected to support the bill, but Cicero effectively bribed Antonius to support him instead by offering him the province of Macedonia – the very wealthy province allocated to Cicero for governing after their consular year was complete. Cicero's speech to the people convinced them that this was a fraudulent gesture of populism, with the aim of personal ambition driving it that would give individuals the power of kings. By thus aligning it with his beliefs about the danger of unconstitutional power in the hands of individuals, Cicero had in many ways positioned himself against another powerful and rising individual – Julius Caesar.

Cicero's most dramatic challenge during his consulship came in the form of a conspiracy to overthrow the government by Catiline. His patriotism, his sense of duty to the state and his dislike of popularis politics left him in no uncertainty as to the guilt of Catiline, but Catiline was a man of patrician rank from an ancient family who had fallen on hard times financially – a man whose family embodied the tradition and past that Cicero was striving to save. Caesar also had supported Catiline's campaign for the consulship the year before (against Cicero). When the trial of some of Catiline's fellow senatorial conspirators came up, Cicero, as consul, was forced to decide on a punishment that would be completely effective, but also legal. Having called a **senatus consultum ultimum**, there was historical precedent for Cicero to have the conspirators executed for treason, despite their Roman citizenship. Caesar recommended imprisonment for life, but it was Cato who argued convincingly to the senate that the conspirators should be executed. With almost full senatorial backing (Caesar was among those who disapproved), Cicero declared the conspirators guilty of treason and had them put to death. It was a triumph for Cicero to have succeeded in gaining such determined support from the elite core of optimates in the senate. According to Plutarch, Cato named Cicero *parens patriae* for

senatus consultum ultimum (SCU) abbreviated form of *senatus consultum de re publica defendenda*, a decree of the senate passed in times of crisis allowing the suspension of the normal restrictions placed on consuls to do whatever was necessary to protect the state

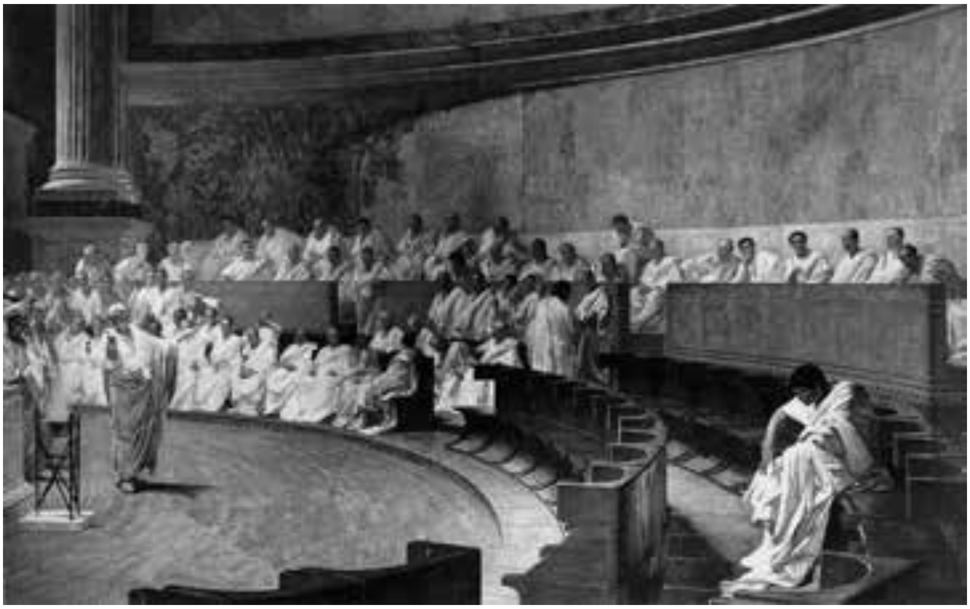


FIGURE 2.17
Cicero Denounces Catiline in a painting by Cesare Maccari in 1888.

Study questions

1. In what ways do you think Cicero's consulship in 63 was a failure, and in what ways was it a success?
2. How important have Cicero's oratorical skills been to him in his professional life by the time he has completed his consulship?

having served and rescued the Roman Republic from collapse. It was a perfect example of a harmonious relationship between boni from the optimates and the equites in the face of a threat to the Republic.

Cicero had achieved his personal ambition to become consul and had even been in a position to save the state from ruin. But however united the senate may have acted over the issue of Catiline and his followers, the concordia ordinum so cherished by Cicero had not been embedded. The end of the 60s saw the optimates close ranks even from other nobiles, and their uncompromising behaviour in the senate towards Caesar, Crassus and Pompey drove the three men together to form an alliance that would serve to undermine the future of the Republic forever.

In his letter of 62 to Pompey, Cicero made it very clear his wish to form an alliance with Pompey, appealing to their shared love for Rome, and signing off

PS

> and you – a much greater man than Africanus was – will find it easy to admit me – one who is not much inferior to Laelius – into association in politics and friendship.
>
> Cicero, *Fam*. 5.7

His aims are clear, and the reference to Scipio and Laelius a flattering one: Cicero was implying that Pompey was a greater military leader than the celebrated Scipio Aemilianus who had destroyed Carthage in 146; Laelius had served in Scipio's army and was a close friend since childhood, albeit from a much less distinguished background. Cicero appears to be hinting at the two of them working closely to serve Rome together, with Cicero in a sort of advisory role to Pompey's established military prowess.

Cicero's desire to both cultivate the optimates and form an amicitia with Pompey meant that the year 61 was to confront him with an impossible choice. Pompey had returned to Rome, following a hugely successful campaign in the East. He had annexed not only the kingdom of Mithridates but that of the Seleucid dynasty too. His campaign had brought 480 million sesterces to the Roman treasury, and his organisation of Roman territory in the East was to raise the annual tax revenue to Rome from 200 million to 340 million sesterces. Pompey wished to celebrate a triumph and become consul for a second time. To achieve the latter Pompey needed the senate to suspend the consular elections until after his triumph. The senate, initially content to do so, was then influenced heavily by Cato, who refused to countenance this request. Pompey also appealed to the senate for two grants – for public land upon which to settle his veterans and for the senate to officially ratify the treatises he had agreed in the East. The optimates, led by Cato, did everything they could to prevent Pompey achieving his aims, no doubt believing that they were curtailing his enormous accumulated power and influence among the people and his army. There was little Cicero could do without alienating an important ally. He may also have felt that Pompey's dignitas had been insulted, unrecognised as he was for his services to the state. As a final insult, Pompey sought Cato's niece's hand in marriage and Cato had refused – a public denial of amicitia.

Cicero's potential relationships with other influential populares politicians were also crushed. Caesar's requests to the senate in recognition of his own services to the state were similarly rejected by Cato and the optimates (see p. 121). The Bona Dea scandal of 62 (see p. 119), and Cicero's role in the prosecution, ensured the enmity of Publius

Clodius Pulcher. In the case of each individual, Cicero had little choice but to side with the optimates, refusing to allow individuals unprecedented power.

CICERO AND THE ‘FIRST TRIUMVIRATE’

There can be no doubt that the formation of the First Triumvirate was a terrible blow to Cicero’s dream of a restored Roman Republic in a state of concordia ordinum. In his letter to Atticus in 59 (*Att.* 2.18) PS, he could not believe the way in which libertas had been curtailed: nobody was happy, but nobody would speak out for that in which they believed. Cicero mentioned that Caesar offered to send him on a trip out of Rome for the time being to relieve him of any awkwardness, but Cicero preferred to stay in the centre of political action. Caesar also offered Cicero a job on his staff. He clearly acknowledged Cicero’s skill and use to the triumvirate, but Cicero oscillated. His principles were being tested to the limit. He did not join the new order, but continued to try to reconcile the different factions, appealing to their common love of Rome. The situation had moved from one of resistance to challenges being made to traditional ways, to working out how to contain or claw back power for the conservative body within the constitution.

Cicero’s self-imposed responsibility for rescuing the old political order was denied him when he was sent into exile from Rome, following a law introduced by a new and vengeful tribune Clodius in 58 which reasserted the illegality of putting Roman citizens to death even under an SCU. Pompey, who had recently been alarmed by a suspected assassination plot to kill him, failed to support Cicero as he had been rumoured to be one of the intended assassins. Caesar had supported Clodius, particularly by enabling him to be adopted into the plebeian order to stand for the powerful position of tribune (see p. 128). Caesar did not support Cicero. Cicero was ordered to leave Rome forever, to stay at least 400 miles from the city. He went to Thessalonika in Macedonia and then Dyrrachium on the Adriatic coast.

The year 57 saw the end of Clodius’ tribuneship, and eight of the ten new tribunes were supporters of Pompey, as was one of the new consuls. Pompey campaigned hard to have Cicero recalled but Rome was beset by terrible mob violence orchestrated by Clodius. Voting proved impossible. Pompey responded by using two of his supportive tribunes – Publius Sestius and Titus Annius Milo – to guard a senate meeting to allow a vote on whether to recall Cicero or not. The vote was passed almost unanimously (only Clodius voted against it). The vote was taken to the centuriate assembly, with Pompey’s guards in place. Cicero’s exile was revoked and he returned to Rome to a glorious homecoming, with throngs of people filling the streets and open spaces of the city to welcome him back.

Within such a short period of time, politics had moved on. Cicero perceived an increasing strain in the amicitia of the triumvirate. Caesar was in Gaul, successfully campaigning, while Pompey was stuck in Rome gaining no glory. Pompey had garnered the support of the tribune Milo to try to check the urban mob in Rome, but Crassus had supported Clodius and his gang. Cracks were beginning to show in the political alliance of the ‘three-headed monster’.

Cicero led lawsuits against Clodius and in defence of Sestius, criticising allies of Caesar's too in the process. In 56, he arranged to be brought up for senatorial debate in May the subject of Caesar's senatorially unpopular agrarian law which had been passed to allocate land in Campania to veterans. True to his principles, Cicero had seen a chink in the armour of the triumvirate and, with Pompey and popular support behind him, he decided to try to disempower Caesar through alienation in his absence.

But before Caesar's Campanian Law could be reassessed and possibly repealed in May, Cicero discovered that Caesar, Crassus and Pompey had met up in Luca (modern Lucca, in northern Tuscany), become reconciled, dismissed their differences and planned newly to divide up Roman territory between them as they wished (see p. 127). The apparent ratification of this arrangement by the senate – nearly 200 senators had also travelled to Luca – was the final straw for Cicero.

Study questions

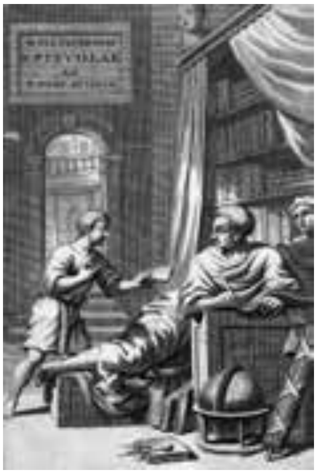
1. What would you have done at this point if you were Cicero?
2. What do you consider to be Cicero's biggest mistake so far?
3. What has been Cicero's greatest success?

Review of the Campanian Law was shelved following a letter request from Pompey to Cicero. For the next couple of years Cicero appears to have worked entirely at the triumvirate's behest, defending individuals he loathed. Unable to believe in the possibility of the resurrection of senatorial authority, he subjected himself in a way he would never have previously believed possible. He wrote bitterly to his friend Atticus:

> Since the powerless do not want to be my friends I must make sure that the powerful are! … But now it is high time for me to be friends with myself and my own interests, since I cannot be with the other lot.
>
> Cicero, *Att.* 4.5

The optimates had become a hard-line and unrealistic elite group within the senate. While Cato had formed an ever tighter group of supporters, sticking fiercely to their 'right' to rule Rome, Cicero – who had lived his life in duty to the state and his political ideals – now had to loosen his previous principles in a political arena without room for compromise.

FIGURE 2.18
A letter is delivered to Cicero in this engraving of an imagined scene used to illustrate an early edition of Cicero's letters to Atticus.



The last few years of the decade brought further challenges again to the stability of the triumvirate. In 54 Pompey's wife and Caesar's daughter – Julia – died, and in 53 Crassus died on his Parthian campaign. Cicero, on the other hand, was supported for the important state religious position of augur by Hortensius, showing that old ties of optimate amicitia had not all died. In 52, Cicero finally took up a defence case he felt driven to win – Milo had been charged with the murder of Clodius. Despite Cicero losing the case, Milo left on friendly terms, and Cicero had demonstrated to all where his principles lay. Other events of 52 saw a major shifting of political alignment. Pompey was able to take control in Rome and appointed his new father-in-law as a co-consul – Quintus Caecilius Metellus Pius Scipio Nasica – a man of the elite, demonstrating a transferral of Pompey's amicitia from Caesar to the optimates.

From mid 51 to the summer of 50 Cicero was to find himself forced to perform a further state duty – that of governor of the province of Cilicia (the southern coastal stretch of what is now Turkey, plus the island of Cyprus). He left a Rome with Pompey united with the senatorial elite and the apparent control of the triumvirate now waning. Governing with fairness and diplomacy, Cicero practised what he had preached in his case against Verres (see pp. 161–162), sorting out existing debts and financial problems left by his predecessor. Perhaps more surprising was Cicero's successful military command in the second half of 51 – pushing back hostile tribes that separated Cilicia from Syria and being hailed *imperator* by his troops, entitling him to a thanksgiving or even a triumph in Rome if the senate agreed. In the event, the senate voted unanimously to grant him one, but Cato alone voted against the motion describing it as 'empty honours'. As with his time in Sicily as quaestor in 75, Cicero claimed to have performed his state duties with thoroughness and an upright character, albeit a somewhat begrudging one at having to leave Rome in such a period of instability where he could be, he felt, more usefully employed (see *Fam.* 2.11) PS.

CIVIL WAR AND MARK ANTONY

The only predictable aspect of politics in Rome during this period was its instability. As he was returning to Rome from his governorship in Cilicia in 50, Cicero received a letter from his friend Caelius, announcing that open warfare was imminent between Caesar and Pompey, and announcing Caelius' own allegiance to Caesar. In Cicero's absence, Caesar's status had come under scrutiny as his governorship of Gaul (ratified as an extension of five years at the conference of Luca in 56) was due to end on 1 March 50. Before Cicero had reached Rome he was to receive further correspondence – from both Pompey and Caesar each desperately encouraging him to join their own party. Cicero took advantage of his position – while he was still responsible for his army, he was forbidden from entering Rome. He planned to wait outside Rome, avoiding the senatorial debates, hoping to work with Caesar and Pompey separately to broker some form of compromise and avert war.

When Caesar crossed the Rubicon on 10 January 49, Cicero was faced with a choice between two sides of a civil war led by two powerful individuals. His principles led him to favour Pompey, supporting as he did the remnants of a Roman Republic. But as we see in his letter to Atticus in February, he was angry also with Pompey for the way he had mismanaged his relationship with Caesar and finally run away:

> He [Pompey] developed Caesar, then he suddenly began to fear him; he rejected all offers of peace; he made no preparations for war; he left Rome; he was to blame for the loss of Picenum; he confined himself in Apulia; he went to Greece; leaving us all without a word, or letting us in on his extraordinary plan upon which so much depended. […] Suddenly … [i]t seemed to me to be as though the light of honour flashed from Pompey's eyes […] But Pompey bids a long goodbye to honour, and proceeds for Brundisium […] Oh, what a terrible business!'
>
> Cicero, *Att.* 8.8

Cicero's unenviable position he summed up in another letter to Atticus in March 49 – 'I know whom to flee, but I know not whom to follow' (*Att.* 8.11.2).

PRESCRIBED SOURCE

Letter from Cicero to Atticus (8.8)

Date: 49 (24 February)

Index: *Att.* 8.8

To: Atticus

From: Cicero in Formiae

Tone: Informal

Significance: Cicero openly decries Pompey's actions, but civil war has been declared (when Caesar crossed the Rubicon on 10 January) and later in the year he will side reluctantly with Pompey – the man most likely to restore the Republic

Themes:
- Cicero's moral drive – disgrace is the worst state to suffer
- Cicero's dislike of both parties is clear – utter disappointment with Pompey for leaving Rome
- The 'light of honour' = to stay and fight in Italy, defending Rome
- Cicero's distress

Read it here: OCR source booklet CW

PS

In a personal letter to Atticus on 12 March 49 (*Att.* 9.4) PS from his villa at Formiae outside Rome, Cicero explained to him the philosophical dilemmas presented to him by his political principles. Without solutions, Cicero claimed he spent his time presenting both sides of each argument, first in Latin, then in Greek, in the style of the exercises that Roman schoolboys traditionally did while learning skills of argument, rhetoric and oratory.

In an attempt to help his country 'by words', Cicero wrote to Caesar a week later on 19 March 49 trying to reconcile him with Pompey, using his skills of persuasion and appealing to common values to try to mediate:

PS

> I believe, however, that your honour and the republic is also at stake as I – a friend of peace and of you both – should be preserved by you as the most appropriate agent for restoring harmony between you two and among our the citizen body.
>
> Cicero, *Att.* 9.11a

A week later Cicero was to meet Caesar at Formiae, but again turned down his invitation to join him in Rome, allowing himself a brief sense of self-approval. In June 49, Cicero set sail for Greece to join Pompey and the senate. The defeat at Pharsalus and death of Pompey helped Cicero to decide he had had enough of the war and he decided to return to Italy. Caesar pursued the remains of the Republican cause to North Africa, where Cato's army was defeated; Cato committed suicide at Thapsus in 46.

Arriving in Brundisium in October 48, Cicero had to wait for Caesar to permit him to enter Italy and return to Rome. The wait was to be agonising – Caesar did not return from

PRESCRIBED SOURCE

Letter from Cicero to Atticus (9.4)

Date: 49 (12 March)

Index: *Att.* 9.4

To: Atticus

From: Cicero in Formiae

Tone: Informal

Significance: Cicero has to choose between Caesar and Pompey in the civil war, and here examines his political principles in a letter to his close friend Atticus

Themes:
- Cicero's philosophy of politics and idealism
- Informal versus formal letter writing and the risks correspondence raises in times like this

Read it here: OCR source booklet

CW

Egypt until September 47. Cicero immediately received Caesar's pardon and, according to Plutarch, friendship, and made his way back to Rome.

SOURCE QUOTATION

Should one stay in one's country if it is under oppressive rule? Is it justifiable to use any means to get rid of such rule, even if they endanger the fabric of the state? Do precautions have to be taken to prevent the liberator becoming a tyrant himself?

If one's country is under such rule, what are the arguments in favour of helping it by words rather than by war?

Is it statesmanlike when one's country is under a tyranny to retire to some other place and remain there inactive, or should you face danger in order to free it?

If one's country is under a tyranny, is it right to concede to its invasion or blockade? Should you, even if not in agreement with war as a means of abolishing tyranny, join up with the right-minded party in order to fight against it?

Should one in matters which concern one's country share the dangers of one's benefactors and friends, even if their policy seems to be without wisdom?

If one has done great service to one's country, and because of this received spiteful and jealous treatment, should one nevertheless voluntarily endanger oneself for the sake of one's country? Or is it legitimate to eventually have some thought for oneself and one's family and to cease fighting against people in power?

Cicero, *Att.* 9.4

Study questions

Read the letter to Atticus (*Att.* 9.4) PS.

Instead of abstract problems, rewrite each of these questions naming the specific people and situations that Cicero has in mind, and the options for action that he is debating.

1 How do you think Caesar would answer each of these questions?
2 How do you think Cato would answer each of these questions?
3 How would you answer each of these questions?

MODERN PARALLEL

Can you think of a current or recent conflict in the world to which the questions posed in Cicero's letter to Atticus might be pertinent today? How have people taken different standpoints, for example the international community, the government, the army, the people, rebels …?

Cicero had been confronted with not only the triumvirate, but then civil war. He was returning now to a Rome ruled by a dictator. His original political ideal of concordia ordinum was in dust, his conservative love for the Republic nothing more than nostalgia. It would have been easy for Cicero to capitulate at this point, curry favour with those in power and preserve his own self-interests. The final year of his life, however, witnessed a Cicero fighting for his political beliefs with a renewed vigour through to his death.

While not directly involved in the assassination of Caesar on the Ides of March in 44, Cicero mourned the fact that he had not been approached for advice (see *Fam.* 10.28) PS. With each member of the triumvirate dead, surely the state was now free to be restored by principled leaders such as Cicero.

The first shock was that the simple removal of the tyrant had not revived Republican freedom. As Cicero bewailed to Atticus in a letter in April 44: 'freedom has been restored without a free state' (*Att.* 14.4) PS. Quite apart from anything else, the conspirators had underestimated how beloved Caesar had been of the people of Rome and his armies. But the main political obstacle came in the form of Mark Antony, Caesar's right-hand man, who had governed Rome for him while he was away completing the final battles of the civil war against remaining Republicans. On Caesar's death, Antony (fearing for his life) had raced to Caesar's house and his widow – Calpurnia – had handed over all Caesar's papers and plans, including his will and his funds. A temporary compromise was reached in which Antony as consul that year assumed responsibility for delivering Caesar's plans, on the understanding that the conspirators would not be put on trial for his murder, but when Caesar's lavish public funeral was held in Rome, and his will leaving largesse to the population was read out, riots broke out with the people demanding punishment of Caesar's assassins. The conspirators fled Rome. In an unexpected twist of fate Caesar's will also included the news that he had adopted another individual – his nephew Gaius Octavius – to be his heir. Octavius (now known as Caesar Octavianus) was to replace Caesar and continue his work, buoyed by popular support. In an attempt not to lose his own grasp of power, Antony fortified himself, bribing Caesar's veterans for their military loyalty and securing a five-year command of Gaul for himself.

FIGURE 2.19
The so-called tomb of Cicero in Formiae, where the statesman lived.

Cicero left Rome in early August 44 to visit his son in Greece, but was forced by bad weather to wait. During this time he heard that he was being accused of treachery to the Republican cause, leaving Rome at this critical time and that Antony was considering an alliance with the anti-Octavian senators. Cicero immediately turned back, only to discover that by the time he had reached Rome on 1 September 44, the rivalry for Caesar's position had been settled by the need for Octavian and Antony to publicly reconcile – both men's troops had been Caesarian veterans who had no desire to fight each other.

Cicero was immediately thrown into the political sway by failing to attend a meeting of the senate on the day he arrived back in Rome, in which Antony was proposing a new holiday be added to the state calendar in honour of Caesar on all occasions upon which festivals were held for the gods. Cicero's absence was interpreted as a lack of support and Antony openly and angrily made threats in the senate house, including one to have Cicero's house torn down. This act was to galvanise Cicero out of the sidelines and on the 2 September 44 – the next day – he appeared in the senate and delivered what was to become known later as his first *Philippic* – an appeal for harmony and moderation and a criticism of Antony's policies in the name of Caesar. In response Antony attended a meeting of the senate on 19 September, which Cicero did not attend as he understood the situation had grown in urgency and anger. According to Tempest (*Cicero*, p. 191), 'Antony arrived at the senate with a gang of armed men, locked the doors, and delivered a comprehensive attack on Cicero's entire career.' Cicero was to respond with his second *Philippic*, not delivered until December, when it was published as a political pamphlet. In this he assassinated Antony's character utterly: he painted him as a debauched tyrant, unfit for public life in every way; he mocked his behaviour and made him out to be a shame to his family and his country. The creation of the ***Philippics*** announced to the Roman world that Cicero – the idealistic and principled champion of the old republic – was back in the political arena, uncowed by the opposition. Furthermore, his attitude towards a potential solution had hardened: once a pacifist, he now saw reason, and indeed urgent demand, for an open fight: better to die a good man than to capitulate to the rule of such an anti-republican monster as Antony.

As the rivalry between Antony and Octavian – only briefly settled earlier – now became exacerbated, civil war once again seemed inevitable. Following rumour of an assassination plot by Octavian to kill Antony, Antony left Rome to gather military support from Macedonia. Octavian also looked for further military backing from within Italy, and approached both the senate and Cicero for support.

In 43 there were two new consuls – Aulus Hirtius and Gaius Vibius Pansa. Constitutionally, Cicero was a very influential statesman, but one whose only power lay in his oratory and ability to persuade, his experience and the respect that went with this.

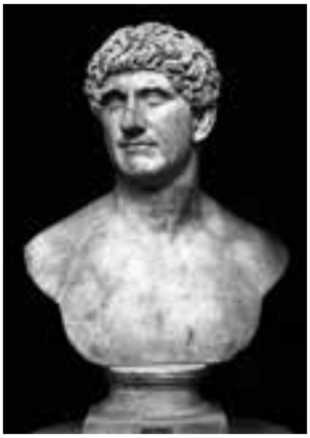


FIGURE 2.20
Portrait bust of Mark Antony, now in the Vatican.

The *Philippics* a term used to refer to Cicero's final series of vitriolic speeches attacking Mark Antony from 44 to 43, named after the Athenian Demosthenes' *Philippic* delivered against Philip II of Macedon in the 4th century. Cicero wrote fourteen *Philippic* speeches in all

KEY INDIVIDUAL

Marcus Antonius (Mark Antony)

Date: 83–30

Roman statesman and general

Mark Antony served under Julius Caesar in both the Gallic and civil wars. In 43 he went on to form a Second Triumvirate with Octavian and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus. He was to die by his own hand following the sea battle of Actium in 31, in which Octavian defeated the joint forces of Antony and Cleopatra.

Gaius Octavius

Date: 63–AD 14

Roman statesman and general, later to become Augustus – the first Roman emperor

Posthumously adopted by Caesar in his will, Octavian changed his name to Gaius Julius Caesar. He formed the Second Triumvirate with Mark Antony and Lepidus in 43 and was in effect sole ruler of the Roman state from 31 after the battle of Actium. He assumed the name Augustus in 27 and ruled until his death in AD 14.

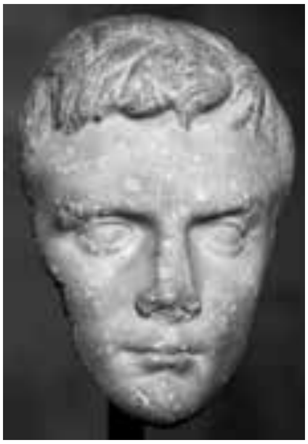


FIGURE 2.21
An early portrait of Octavian (the later emperor Augustus).

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

> From then on [1 January 43 BC], he translated his philosophical musings into political pragmatism: war, Cicero believed, was the only way to save Rome from Antony's grasp. And if the law was broken in the process, the law had to be fixed to meet the current crisis. These two ideas, the need for all-out combat and extra-legal measures, are key to understanding Cicero's political activity in the months which followed. For he now championed the illegally-raised forces of the young Octavian. […] And his hopes rested on creating a united military and political force to challenge Antony's despotic intentions.
>
> K. Tempest, *Cicero*, pp. 195–197

Tempest identifies a change in Cicero's approach to politics in Rome in his final months.

Do you think this pragmatism undermines or underlines the idealism and political beliefs that Cicero had promoted all his life? If Cato were alive at this point, what stance do you think he might have taken?

He put his whole soul into alienating Antony within the senate and rallying Rome to war to remove the threat he posed. Most of all he needed to create a sense of urgency and crisis to encourage action. The *Philippics* that he delivered in the senate were hyperbolic by today's standards, offering stark options: war or slavery, Roman culture or the death of Roman culture, good or evil. Peace had, he argued, become 'disgraceful … dangerous … impossible' (Cicero, *Philippic* 7.9).

On 15 April 43 the first battle between Antony and Republican armies took place. The armies of both consuls and Octavian had advanced to Mutina and together had attacked Antony's forces successfully. A second battle took place on 21 April. Antony survived and escaped, and was pronounced a public enemy of the state by the senate on 26 April. The victory, however, brought with it political instability again at Rome as both consuls had died as a result. Within a month the triumphant senate had disintegrated back into Caesarian versus Pompeian factions while Antony had succeeded in rallying troops back to him. Cicero looked to Octavian.

The senate needed Octavian's support and troops to fight Antony, and Cicero openly praised Octavian to the senate. The senate, however, was as ever suspicious of depending upon one military commander for fear of rising despotism. Octavian wanted the consulship, but the senate were reluctant to appoint him. Octavian marched on Rome and was appointed consul.

In September 44 Octavian marched north to fight Antony and his troops. Octavian, with Marcus Aemilius Lepidus as mediator, met up with Antony, and between them instead they formed a new alliance (the 'Second Triumvirate'), crushing the hopes of Cicero forever. Their united aim was to take vengeance on the opponents of Julius

Caesar, and an enormous proscription list was drawn up naming 300 senators and 2,000 equites, including Cicero, his brother, his son and nephew. When bounty hunters came to Cicero's villa at Formiae on 7 December 43 to kill him and claim the prize on his head from Antony, Cicero was said bravely to have offered his neck to them.

TOPIC REVIEW

These questions should draw on your knowledge of the whole topic, so think carefully about the different things you have learned (check the Topic Overview on p. 138).

1. What were Cicero's political ideals?
2. How important to Cicero was networking and communication?
3. Considering Cicero over his whole lifetime, how consistent was he in the way he acted on his political ideals?
4. How differently, and what ways, do you think Cicero would have interacted with Cato, Pompey and Caesar if he had been born a member of the nobiles?
5. Who do you think was a better politician – Cicero, Cato or Caesar? Why?

Further Reading

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Marin, P. (2009), *Blood in the Forum: The Struggle for the Roman Republic*, Bloomsbury Academic.
Murrell, J. (2008), *Cicero and the Roman Republic*, Cambridge University Press.
Scullard, H. H. (1982), *From the Gracchi to Nero*, 5th Edition, Routledge, Ch. 6.
Tempest, K. (2011), *Cicero. Politics and Persuasion in Ancient Rome*, Bloomsbury Academic.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Becoming a consul was often the high point of a Roman's career.

1. (a) In what year did Cicero hold the consulship? [1]
   (b) Name **two** key events that involved Cicero that year in Rome. [2]
2. 'Cicero was driven by personal ambition more than principle.' To what extent do you agree with this opinion? Justify your response [30]

2.5 Cicero as Orator: *In Verrem* 1

TOPIC OVERVIEW

- The courtroom setting, partial delivery and subsequent publication of the Verrine speeches
- The form, structure and style of Roman legal oratory including devices such as anaphora, apostrophe, tricolon and hyperbole
- The ways in which the speech is typical of Roman rhetorical practice
- The themes of corruption, justice and the necessity of upholding the state
- His portrayal of Verres and his corruption, and how this is created

The following prescribed source is covered in this topic:

- Cicero, *In Verrem* 1

Don't forget that you will be given credit in the exam if you study extra sources and make relevant use of them in your answers.

PRESCRIBED SOURCE

In Verrem 1

Date: 70

Author: Marcus Tullius Cicero

Genre: Forensic (legal) oratory

Summary: The first of seven speeches known as the Verrine orations. Only the first two were delivered. In this speech, Cicero focusses on the responsibility of the jury, details Verres' early crimes before and during his office as governor and reveals the ways in which Verres and his supporters had tried to pervert the course of justice.

Significance: Cicero establishes his fame in Rome by successfully prosecuting an extremely wealthy member of the nobiles who is defended by Hortensius – the leading orator of the time

Read it here: OCR source booklet

The speech Cicero delivered in the trial against Verres in 70 was to establish him as Rome's greatest orator, winning him friends and allies as well as fame. His intimate understanding of the power of rhetoric and his oratorical skills enabled him to persuade his audience to break with a growing tradition of corruption and to sacrifice 'one of their own' – a senator accused by a mere novus homo. It also allowed Cicero to showcase himself as the ultimate Roman patriot dedicated to establishing some form of concordia ordinum and rooting out 'un-Roman' behaviour. It was this power of oratory that was to render Cicero so valuable to other political players of the times.

KEY EVENT

The trial of Verres

Date: 70

Accused: Gaius Verres

Presiding Judge: Manius Acilius Glabrio

Prosecution Lawyer: Marcus Tullius Cicero

Defence Lawyer: Quintus Hortensius Hortalus

Alleged Crime: Extortion of 400,000 sesterces from the province of Sicily during his governorship from 73 to 71

Location: Extortion court, Rome

Outcome: Verres found guilty, but fled Rome before the trial was concluded and lived out his life in exile

IN VERREM 1: SETTING, DELIVERY AND PUBLICATION

The trial of Verres was to mark a significant turning point for Cicero in his political career. By 70, Cicero had established a name for himself through the *pro Roscio Amerino* trial in 80, in which he had successfully defended Roscius against a charge of parricide. Cicero had since married and acquired some wealth, and been elected quaestor at the earliest age allowed. He had served his quaestorship at Lilybaeum in Sicily and earned himself a reputation for fairness and thoroughness. After three years of suffering at the hands of Verres, the Sicilians sent embassies to Rome to ask Cicero to plead their case against Verres and his unacceptable maladministration of the province.

Cicero was to deliver *In Verrem* 1 in the permanent court in Rome specifically for cases of extortion. Verres' fame and that of his defence counsel – Quintus Hortensius Hortalus – guaranteed it would draw a large crowd of public spectators. People had also flocked to Rome for the elections and to enjoy the public festival granted to celebrate Pompey's military success in the East. For Cicero it was the perfect arena in which to showcase his oratorical and rhetorical talent, and further raise his profile.

The judge was Manius Acilius Glabrio. The jury comprised senators alone since Sulla had removed the rights for equites to stand on juries. Verres himself was a member of the nobiles. Cicero, it must be remembered, was a novus homo, with no significant political network of support: he would be reliant on his oratorical skills of persuasion to sway jury and judge on the day of the delivery of his speech.

FIGURE 2.22
An engraving of Cicero and Verres.

Despite an extraordinary number of setbacks deliberately created by Verres, Cicero acquired an overwhelming amount of evidence and number of witnesses and, by changing the normal procedure of speeches (see p. 164), delivered the first Verrine to devastating effect. Hortensius advised Verres to leave Rome in voluntary exile immediately, which he did, and the case was successfully won by Cicero without giving the rest of the speeches he had prepared.

In accepting and winning the case, Cicero achieved a number of personal aims. His oratorical prestige became acclaimed, for he had defeated Hortensius who was widely acknowledged to be Rome's greatest orator of the time. Within the senate, Cicero's views were now to be called upon earlier in debates – alongside those who had held praetorships – a result of a law which allowed any senator who had won a prosecution to be given the accused's position in the senate. He had extended his client base significantly, including the people of Sicily and one of their traditional patrons – the Claudii Marcelli family. He had, in short, notably elevated his dignitas in public life in Rome, enabled his voice to be heard in the senate and extended his network of amicitiae.

While it is clear that Cicero had a lot to gain personally from the successful outcome of the trial, *In Verrem* 1 is also an interesting study of how he married his personal ambition with his political ideals. The speech presents us with a Cicero clearly stating his political position, fighting for the status quo and traditional Roman values, elevating the optimates and senate back up to the status he felt they had both rights to and responsibilities therefrom. He represented himself as a friend of the clients that Verres had insulted and a champion of Roman law and justice.

Cicero's decision to publish the complete speeches was not unusual, but certainly demonstrates the importance he attached to them and pride at his success. The written version meant that his words would be monumentalised, even though he had not actually delivered them all in court, and his status solidified in the Roman public eye. It also stood as evidence of the corruption of an individual member of the senate revealed and punished, gaining him political capital and credentials.

KEY INDIVIDUAL

Gaius Verres

Date: 120–43

Roman magistrate

A member of the nobiles, Verres was put on trial in 70 for the extortion of the province of Sicily where he had been governor from 73 to 71. Verres fled into exile on the second day of the trial and remained in Massilia (modern-day Marseilles) until his death in 43, his name included on the proscription list by Mark Antony.

ROMAN LEGAL ORATORY

The art of public speaking was the essential cornerstone of an education in Republican Rome. Success in public life demanded accomplished public speaking, particularly in the courts and in politics. Oratorical skills – the ability to persuade through speech – translated into power in a society where decisions were made after formal deliberation and discussion in the senate and within the assemblies. Legal, or forensic, oratory was studied and practised in great detail by those Roman boys wealthy enough to pay for an education, in preparation for a life of public duty.

Cicero was not only a brilliant orator, but also wrote about the art of writing and delivering successful speeches, for instance his works include *De Inventione*, *De Oratore*, *De Partitionibus Oratoriae*, *De Optimo Genere Oratorum* and *Brutus*. The composition of speeches was taught as structurally formulaic, which of course also allowed room for bending the rules.

The success of any orator depended on his script. Hand-in-hand with an education on oratory was learning how to recognise and use rhetoric to its most effective ends. Yet oratory was not simply about speeches, but also the delivery of those speeches. Legal oratory was public courtroom drama, which was why it attracted such large audiences and why successful lawyers won fame. Juries were influenced by well-presented evidence, but also by how authoritative the speaker appeared, what sort of person the accused was painted to be and what common cultural ground or values the jury shared with each of the advocates. The response of the audience also, of course, could not be ignored.

Juries might be influenced by oratorical fashion, as 'styles' of oratory developed over the ages. For example, a formal, austere approach was traditional in Rome up until the period we are looking at when Hortensius adopted an 'Asian' style of oratory which incorporated emotion, flourishes of wordplay and drama in a way hitherto unseen at Rome. Cicero himself produced his own style amalgamating the two to great effect.

MODERN PARALLEL

Legal Speeches

Consider the extract below reflecting modern rules for legal speeches:

> A lawyer shall not … in trial, allude to any matter that the lawyer does not reasonably believe is relevant or that will not be supported by admissable evidence, assert personal knowledge of facts in issue except when testifying as a witness, or state a personal opinion as to the justness of a cause, the credibility of a witness, the culpability of a civil litigant or the guilt or innocence of an accused.
>
> (cited by Vasaly, *The Political Impact of Cicero's Speeches*, p. 152)

By these standards, how much of Cicero's speech against Verres would need amending? Why do we follow such rules today?

Vasaly identifies Cicero's own ideal oratory, on the other hand, as 'a means by which the best statesman achieved an ethically virtuous end: i.e., the preservation of the state in its best form' (p. 154). She explains, p. 155:

> He does conceive of its optimal function as presenting the best possible arguments on any issue to the people, who are then meant to weigh each side dispassionately and make an informed decision. Rather, oratory is a tool to manipulate an audience, most effectively by playing on their emotions. The point is not necessarily for them to understand or reason, but to respond, by thinking and acting in a way that the orator alone has determined to be most advantageous to the state.

To what extent do you think this applies to Cicero's *In Verrem* 1 speech?

When analysing Cicero's speech against Verres, it is vital to remember the cultural context of the setting: what is acceptable or even laudable for one society in time may be perceived as unacceptable in another.

ROMAN RHETORIC

Rhetoric, or the language of persuasion, was key to Roman public life. It was, like oratory, studied in great detail and subject to as much formal categorisation. The key to forensic oratory for Cicero was to deliver a speech with the rhetoric to persuade the judge and jury to agree with his version of events and judgement (not forgetting of course the potential influence of the audience).

When considering *In Verrem* 1, we shall be examining the rhetorical skill of Cicero's arguments, what he said, how he said it and why (or what potential effect it had). In the rest of this chapter, we shall be looking not only at the listed crimes of Verres but also at how Cicero represented himself as a figure of authority and conversely how he portrayed Verres as a morally as well as politically corrupt person, and how Cicero framed the senatorial jury by appealing to what he assumed would be shared, traditional Roman values.

Aside from specific details, Cicero employed many features common to speeches in which the speaker wished to move his audience emotionally. A number of rhetorical topics were identified for this purpose by the anonymous author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (once falsely attributed to Cicero himself) – the earliest surviving Latin text on rhetoric (from the late 80s).

Such rhetorical commonplaces included:

- Appealing to how important the contentious issue or crime is to a main authority such as the senate, Roman ancestors or the gods
- Presenting sympathetically who has been affected
- Exploring what would happen if this crime were to go unpunished
- Appealing to the idea of setting an example to prevent encouragement of such behaviour in the future
- Emphasising the inability to 'turn back' on the judgement later or mitigate its effects
- Proving deliberate premeditation by the accused
- Emphasising the foulness of the crime
- Noting the unique nature of the crime and preventing further examples by suitably punishing the first instance of it
- Underlining the scale of the crime by comparing motives for it to those for other wrongs
- Describing the crime in such detail that the jury feels they are witnessing it for themselves

FIGURE 2.23
Rhetoric was a core subject in Roman education for many centuries. This relief from centuries after the Republic shows a rhetoric teacher with his pupils.

Cicero adopted many of these approaches, and many more besides. He had recourse also to his knowledge of a very wide range of literary stylistic devices, well known for their effect. In adopting such features he was to find them effective not only in his argument but also in demonstrating his education and oratorical authority. Below are some of the more common rhetorical devices Cicero employed.

These specific literary devices as well as a host of other rhetorically effective turns of phrase, choices of vocabulary and rhetorical commonplaces can be found throughout *In Verrem* 1. We shall look at each of these in context as we analyse the speech in more detail below.

CORRUPTION, JUSTICE AND THE DEFENCE OF THE STATE

On the face of it, Verres was being brought to trial for the extortion of 400,000 sesterces from the province of Sicily. In Cicero's speech, however, this specific crime is mentioned only in the final paragraph. What, then, was the focus of *In Verrem* 1?

The speech created a situation in which the accused, the prosecutor and the jury were all carefully framed by Cicero to render the jury morally and politically obliged to pass a guilty verdict. This, with an overwhelming arsenal of evidence, secured Cicero's success.

In this section we shall look in detail at two ways in which Cicero constructed this piece of dramatic oratory. First, we shall examine the way in which he created an urgent sense of social and political crisis, in which the senatorial order was under threat of collapse from corruption within. This served sometimes to shift Cicero's argument from a focus on Verres to what was at stake for the members of the jury – the future stability of the Republican social orders and the superiority of the senate.

Secondly, and of paramount importance, was Cicero's own self-representation as a champion of Roman values – moral, legal and political. The embodiment of a citizen devoted to his country, he portrayed himself as a defender of the senate's prestige, of the rights of Rome's allies and provinces and of the traditional systems and values of Roman law, justice and upright character. This was very much in line with his conservative political idealism.

The framing of Verres himself is dealt with in the final section below.

EXAM TIP

Credit in the examination will be given for use of some technical vocabulary but only when you can explain its effect: this is the most important skill.

(i) Crisis

The opening paragraph to the first Verrine speech sets the scene. Verres remains unnamed, as does any direct mention of the crime of extortion. Instead, Cicero instantly re-frames the trial as an opportunity to rescue the country from dire crisis. He explains that the real issue at stake is the perception of a rotten core within society, in which money speaks louder than justice. The perpetrators are, he argues, those who allow corruption to take place unpunished. The effect is distrust and dislike of the senatorial order that comprises the juries – a damaged reputation that threatens concordia ordinum and the stability of the Roman state.

In this opening, Cicero immediately employs one of the rhetorical commonplaces listed above – 'Appealing to how important the contentious issue or crime is to a main authority such as the senate.' He addresses the jury as if opening a direct conversation with them (**apostrophe**), demanding their full attention. The language is full of references to imminent threat: the situation is 'destructive' and 'dangerous'. The speech is also full of **hyperbole**: it is a 'crucial time for the republic'; the scale of the problem for the senate has become international: 'rumour is spreading, not only among the Roman people, but also among foreign nations', and he sweepingly dismisses room for exception – 'no wealthy man, however guilty he may be, can possibly be convicted'. He continues in this vein later:

apostrophe a direct address to a third party to break up the narrative voice

hyperbole exaggeration

> That man's [Verres'] wicked plans, which he endeavours to plot simultaneously against me, against you, Manius Glabrio, and against the Roman people; he plots against the allies, against foreign nations, against the senate and against the very name of senator.
>
> Cicero, *In Verrem*, Ch. 4

The threat to the harmony of the orders is the focus again later in the speech, in Chapter 20: if the senatorial jury in this instance finds Verres innocent when everyone knows that he is not, then the senate's privileged position in the law courts will be grasped by the equites.

Cicero also makes a point of illustrating how much anger there is among the people concerning the corruption in the courts. The hero of the people – Pompey – when making his first public speech outside Rome

> had said in the same assembly that the provinces were plundered and plagued; that the law courts had become disgraceful and wicked; and that he wished to look into and make provisions for this situation; then indeed the Roman people showed their assent not with a shout, but with the greatest uproar.
>
> Cicero, *In Verrem*, Ch. 45

In short, the bribery and corruption of which Verres was guilty was universally recognised and (according to Cicero) a disliked phenomenon, and had even come to the attention of powerful popularis political leaders as well as the common people. The threat, Cicero is arguing, posed by this case was potentially damaging to the very structure of Republican society and to the mutual respect and order that had enabled the Republican political system privileging the senate to run so well for so long.

Study question
Why do you think Cicero chose to add this reference to Pompey? How might it have benefitted Cicero?

The crime to be judged by the jury, then, has moved from 'simply' being one of extortion to one of corruption and bribery, the appalling condition of the Roman justice system and a threat to the stability of the very fabric of the Roman state.

Cicero pushes the point further by stating that the trial will effectively also stand for posterity as a trial of the senate and jury itself:

> This is a trial in which you will be judging the defendant, and the Roman people will be judging you. In the case of this man, it will be established whether very guilty and very rich men are able to be condemned when senators are acting as judges.
>
> Cicero, *In Verrem*, Ch. 47

Cicero has dedicated the best part of his opening speech defining the case as a symbolic enormity for the Roman state, rendering the role of this jury more pivotal than any before and placing them firmly under the spotlight of the whole Roman world both now and in the future.

(ii) Defender of the state

Cicero was more of a master of rhetoric than simply to chide and threaten the senators into supporting his prosecution of Verres. They formed the very body into which Cicero was so keen to be accepted. Rather than alienate himself, he referred many times to his own place within that problematic order. He states openly towards the start of the speech that he is acting here as prosecution:

> not so that I might increase the unpopularity of the senate, but so that I might relieve it from the dishonour which I share with it.
>
> Cicero, *In Verrem*, Ch. 2

Study question

He [Verres] sees that many senators are witnesses to his audacity, that many Roman knights are too, and numerous citizens and allies besides, to whom he himself has done notable harm. He also sees that such numerous, important embassies from the cities of our closest allies have convened, armed with public authority and evidence from their respective states.

Cicero, *In Verrem*, Ch. 7

[…]

this crowd from the whole of Italy […] which has assembled from all over at this one time on account of the *comitia*, the games, and the census.

Cicero, *In Verrem*, Ch. 54

Consider why Cicero decides so often to detail or refer to the audience. What do you think might be the effect on the jury and on Verres? What might be the effect on the audience itself, and why might this be useful to Cicero?

More common is the language Cicero uses below:

> There is no severity believed to exist in our courts, nor any concerns for religion; in short, there are thought to be no courts at all. Therefore, we are held in contempt and despised by the Roman people: we are branded with a heavy, and now longstanding, infamy.
>
> Cicero, *In Verrem*, Ch. 43

Cicero takes great pains to speak a rhetoric of inclusivity when discussing the senatorial order – the speech is peppered throughout with words chosen to show he shares their status, interests and fate: ‘our courts’, ‘we are held in contempt’, ‘we are branded’.

Cicero also flatters the jury, sometimes quite openly. In the middle of the speech (Chapters 29–30) PS he adopts what he claims to be Verres’ viewpoint, considering why it would be better for him to have a different judge and jury by delaying the trial until the following year. Quite apart from the content of what he says, the rhetoric of the prosecutor pretending in court to be the accused thinking out loud is entertaining and almost comical with its mocking exposure of (and therefore superiority over) the mind of the criminal. ‘Verres’ (i.e. Cicero) makes the whole scene particularly effective by naming the judge and individuals of the jury and considering aloud how tricky they are going to be to corrupt owing to them being ‘too diligent’ (Glabrio), to their fame and experience (Caesonius), their horror of corruption (Gaius Junius), their strict and lofty principles (Sulpicius), their ‘keenest discipline’ (Crepereius), or being ‘from a family known to be most harsh in all other matters but particularly in judicial ones’ (Lucius Cassius) or ‘a man of the greatest conscience and diligence’ (Gnaeus Tremellius). This is courtroom theatre at its best, and Cicero knew that entertainment and flattery was an extremely effective form of persuasion.

By flattering the jury, Cicero also placed pressure on them to find Verres guilty: since this was the best ever panel of jurymen, he claimed, they must seize the opportunity to make this display of rectitude or else admit that the senatorial order was incapable of fulfilling its legal duties and hand over the role to the equites.

Cicero – an 'outsider' in almost every way – needed to create an authority for himself that would integrate him further if he wished for a sympathetic judgement. He did this by appealing to a shared code of values of patriotic love and duty. His own self-styled role as 'defender of the state' is referred to directly or indirectly throughout the speech, even claiming he would rather 'lose [his] life itself … than fall short of the vigour and perseverance needed'. When addressing the presiding judge by name towards the end of the speech, Cicero appeals directly to his shared love for and duty towards Rome (see Source Quotation).

SOURCE QUOTATION

> and if anything should befall me then you will be able to make provisions for it, Manius Glabrio, with your authority, wisdom and diligence. Accept the cause of the law courts. Accept the cause of severity, integrity, loyalty and religion. Accept the cause of the senate, that by its conduct in this court, it may return to favour and regain influence over the Roman people. Think who you are, in what position you are placed, what you ought to give to the Roman people, what you ought to repay to your ancestors. Call to mind the Acilian law passed by your father, by which the Roman people enjoyed the very best decisions, and the most severe judges in cases of extortion.
>
> High authorities surround you which will not permit you to forget the renown of your family; which will remind you that by day and night your father was a most brave man, your grandfather most wise, and your father-in-law most serious. If, in this regard, you have inherited the strength and vigour of your father in resisting most audacious men; if you have inherited the prudence of your grandfather, Scaevola, in foreseeing plots which are prepared against your reputation and that of these men; if you have any share in the steadfastness of your father-in-law, Scaurus, so that no one can move you from your genuine and fixed opinion; the Roman people will understand that with a most upright and honourable praetor and a well-chosen jury, large amounts of money are more likely to bring a criminal into suspicion, rather than provide a means for his safety.
>
> Cicero, *In Verrem*, Chs. 51–52

CICERO'S PORTRAIT OF VERRES

Cicero concludes his first Verrine oration with the actual crime for which he is prosecuting Verres.

> We say that Gaius Verres has done many licentious deeds, many cruel ones against Roman citizens and allies, and many wicked acts against gods and men; but especially that he has stolen four hundred thousand sesterces from Sicily contrary to the laws.
>
> Cicero, *In Verrem*, Ch. 56

Study questions

Study the Source Quotation on the previous page.

1. Read it out loud.
2. Make a list of all the adjectives you can think of to describe the tone of this passage.
3. Identify five commands in the first paragraph. What effect do these have on the tone of the speech?
4. Identify an example of **anaphora** in the first paragraph.
5. How many commands are there in the second paragraph?
6. By addressing Manius Glabrio directly, Cicero turns this part of his prosecution of Verres into a direct speech to the judge alone. How do you think Cicero would have spoken and stood while delivering these paragraphs?
7. Using the Internet, research the members of Glabrio's family that Cicero refers or alludes to here – what were they famous for? What effect do you think he is trying to have on Glabrio by discussing these members of his family?
8. What effect does Cicero's naming of these famous men have on his portrayal of himself as a patriotic speaker?
9. In the second paragraph, Cicero appeals to a number of things of which Glabrio should be mindful. List them. Why might these things have been particularly effective when trying to appeal to an optimate?
10. Identify three **tricolons** in this extract. What effect does offering examples of three have in each case?
11. Identify an example of **asyndeton**. How different would be the effect of the sentence if conjunctions were added (**polysyndeton**)?
12. Try to rewrite this extract without directing it at Glabrio, but instead using third-person narrative. Read it out loud. What effects on the audience (and indeed Glabrio), if any, do you think are lost?

anaphora	a word or phrase that is repeated at the start of neighbouring clauses for emphatic effect
tricolon	a series of three clearly defined words, phrases or (more commonly) clauses in a sentence. An *ascending tricolon* is one in which each word, phrase or clause is successively more powerful. For example: 'I came, I saw, I conquered!' (*veni, vidi, vici!*) – attributed to Julius Caesar in a report to the senate on his swiftly won victory in 47 at the Battle of Zela.
asyndeton	a lack of conjunctions in a list to give the description intensity
polysyndeton	the use of an unnecessarily large number of conjunctions in a list to emphasise the number of things being listed

The speech itself, however, is not about the sum of 400,000 sesterces, but focuses upon the character of Verres, his history of crime of all sorts and his absolute belief in the ultimate power of money. Cicero is prosecuting an established member of the nobiles, with a jury made up of senators. How can he gain a sympathetic hearing given Verres' inevitable existing ties of amicitia with powerful senators? Cicero's approach is to 'alienate' Verres from the culture and society in which he is established. How, he implies, can Verres be described as a friend, as a Roman, when he abuses the very social, political and legal codes that make up Republican Rome?

To certify Verres' established criminal character, Cicero begins the main part of his speech by listing his crimes while holding offices of responsibility to the Roman state:

PS

> what else happened in his quaestorship (the first step of honour); except that Gnaeus Carbo was robbed of public money by his own quaestor? That the consul was plundered and betrayed? His army deserted? His province abandoned? The religious duties and rites assigned to him by lot were violated?
>
> Cicero, *In Verrem*, Ch. 11

praeteritio saying you will not mention something and in so doing deliberately mentioning it and bringing it to mind

Study questions

> For what genius is so great, what ability or means of speaking is able in any way to defend the life of that man, convicted as he is of so many vices and crimes, and long since condemned by the will and judgement of all?
>
> And, to say nothing of the dishonours and disgraces of his youth …
>
> Cicero, *In Verrem*, Chs. 10–11

1 Cicero considers here Verres' earliest days before he started climbing the cursus honorum. Cicero's rhetoric is full of hyperbole. Which words in this extract highlight the hyperbole? What effect does it have?

2 Cicero also includes here an excellent example of **praeteritio**. What is the effect of it in this case?

As provincial legate in Asia and Pamphylia he 'even attacked and betrayed the man to whom he had been lieutenant and proquaestor, and whom he had brought into disrepute with his crimes' (Ch. 11) PS. When praetor in Rome, Verres was guilty of 'the destruction of the sacred temples and public works, and also, in terms of his legal decisions, the adjudicating and awarding of property contrary to all established rules' (Ch. 12) PS. But it was his governorship of Sicily from 73 to 71 that crowned Verres' criminal achievements and best illustrated his disrespect for Roman values:

> he has established vast and numerous monuments and proofs of all of his vices in the province of Sicily, which he harassed and ruined for three years to such an extent that it is utterly impossible for it to be restored to its previous state …. When *this* man was praetor, the Sicilians held neither their own laws, nor the decrees of our senate, nor common rights.
>
> Cicero, *In Verrem*, Chs. 12–13

According to Cicero, inheritances were cancelled, farmers robbed, criminals unpunished, good innocent men found guilty of crimes in their absence, cities were left undefended, the seas full of pirates and civilians starved to death.

> The most faithful allies were included in the number of enemies; Roman citizens were tortured and killed like slaves …
>
> Cicero, *In Verrem*, Ch. 13

In short, Verres' history, painted in so much detail by Cicero, pointed to a man who had led a life of greed and illegality, safely cocooned, he believed, by enough money to bribe any court that might try to prosecute him for his unacceptable and un-Roman behaviour.

Having spelled out Verres' political crimes, Cicero went on to denigrate Verres' character further by casting his private life also in a culturally abhorrent light.

> I am prevented by shame from mentioning the criminal lust of that man, shown by his sexual activities and scandals. At the same time, by recalling such acts, I do not wish to increase the damage done to those men who were unable to keep their wives and children untouched by that man's wanton lust.
>
> Cicero, *In Verrem*, Ch. 14

This is a classic example of Ciceronian praeteritio. The whole section, of which the above is an extract, implies that Verres has committed many atrocious sexual crimes against children and married women, crimes so awful that it would be indecent to describe them. At the same time as damning Verres, Cicero paints himself and the audience as morally superior, as he (and the audience) is too considerate of those men whose families have been affected to give full names and details as it would only add further public dishonour to the victims. The vagueness of this could allow the implication that there were men present at the trial whose families might have been affected in this way by Verres, perhaps without them knowing it! Cicero goes on to explain that listing the crimes would also be unnecessary as the whole audience already knew about this aspect of Verres’ character. Without naming one specific crime, or giving one piece of evidence, this example of praeteritio has succeeded in planting in Cicero’s audience’s mind the notion that it is incontrovertibly and universally known that Verres was a sexual monster and threat, despite this not being part of the legal case against him.

VERRES’ CORRUPTION AND DISRUPTION OF THE TRIAL ITSELF

Cicero adds further drama and relevance to this trial for the jury by dedicating a significant proportion of his speech to the lengths to which Verres tried to corrupt and disrupt the trial itself. He identifies a number of significant occasions in preparation for the trial upon which Verres bribed important individuals. Verres had, Cicero claims, already offered large sums of money to agents to bribe this very jury. But Verres was also playing a much wider hand, for he had invested in large-scale bribery in the political elections that year to ensure that friends and supporters of importance were elected to key offices to influence the outcome of his trial. One of these was Hortensius who had been elected consul for the following year. According to Cicero, Gaius Scribonius Curio had highlighted the import of this on Verres’ extortion case by shouting to Verres in public that day ‘“I tell you,” [he said], “that you have been acquitted by today’s *comitia*.”’ (Ch. 19) PS. Verres also, states Cicero, ensured through bribery that Marcus Caecilius Metellus should be praetor and president over the extortion court the following year. As if this was not enough, Verres had even offered 500,000 sesterces to any agent prepared to bribe the electorate NOT to vote for Cicero as aedile. One of the strengths of Cicero’s argument lay in his public naming and shaming of individuals in this web of corruption. He promised that he was to produce plentiful evidence for all his accusations.

Cicero had requested 110 days to collect and prepare the evidence he needed for the case. Verres and his supporters introduced a trumped-up charge or extortion against another governor (of Achaia), asking for 108 days to gather evidence. The effect of this would be to place the ‘new’ extortion case ahead of the Verres trial in the extortion court and, in doing so, edge it out of the year’s calendar. Cicero’s response was to work at incredible speed successfully to gather the evidence even faster, ensuring the Verres trial was still first in the queue for the extortion court.

Study question
When Cicero discusses the money Verres used for bribery, he calls it 'Sicilian money'. What does he mean by this, and what effect do you think it might have on his audience?

Verres' reason for wishing to postpone the case to the following year was, as Cicero puts it, to avoid the trial running during 'the most violent gusts of the storm' (Ch. 8) PS. Cicero explained the allusion at length. With an excellent and reputable judge, and a similarly upstanding set of jurymen, Verres' case would have less likelihood of winning. However, by postponing the case until the following year, his defence counsel would be the new consul. Marcus Caecilius Metellus – a relative of the other consul elect and a man supportive of Verres – would be a praetor and the president of the extortion court. Rid of most of the outstanding members of the jury of 70 (since they had been voted offices of state for the following year), Verres would have as favourable a court as he could have hoped in 69.

To counteract Verres' now-exposed plot, Cicero proposed somewhat radically (but not, he took pains to state, without legal precedent) to change the order of the running of the trial. Such cases were usually opened with very long set speeches, but instead Cicero chose to deliver a hard-hitting first speech (*In Verrem* 1), followed immediately by the examination of a plethora of witnesses and presenting the abundant evidence he had gathered from Sicily. He persuasively argued that this change in running order was acceptable not simply due to precedent but also out of necessity:

PS

> what we are doing now is unavoidable. We are doing it this way so that we might resist their malice with our own strategy.
>
> Cicero, *In Verrem*, Ch. 56

Cicero had succeeded in painting such a negative picture of Verres, in alienating him from any potential support he might have assumed from existing amicitiae, that Hortensius advised him after the speech that the case was over and that he should flee Rome and go into voluntary exile, which he did.

PS

Study question

> Today is the Nones of August. You began your meeting at the eighth hour. This day they do not even count. There are ten days before the votive games which Gnaeus Pompeius is going to celebrate. These games will take fifteen days, and then the Roman games will follow immediately. And so, when almost forty days have passed, only then will they think that they will have to respond to the things which we will have said, and they think that both by making speeches and excuses they will easily draw out the process until the games of Victory. The plebeian games are connected with these, following which there will either be no days or very few for continuing proceedings.
>
> Cicero, *In Verrem*, Ch. 31

Despite the fact that the trial was set for late July 70, Cicero exposes how Verres' plan was to get the case postponed until the following year, or at least dragged out with lengthy gaps over the rest of the year to reduce Cicero's impact and strength.

Research the games and public festivals listed here. Which ones were peculiar to 70, and which were annual events?

TOPIC REVIEW

These questions should draw on your knowledge of the whole topic, so think carefully about the different things you have learned (check the Topic Overview on p. 152).

1. How important was the setting in which Cicero's speech was delivered, and to what extent do you think the speech reflects this? Refer directly to the text for your evidence.
2. Consider the differences between legal cases in Cicero's day and those today. Do you think Cicero would have been as successful today? Give reasons for your answer.
3. How important to Cicero are his ideals of devotion to the Roman state and Roman values? Refer directly to the text for your evidence.
4. To what extent would you consider this a politically important speech? Give reasons for your view.

Further Reading

Gowing, A. M. (2013), 'Tully's boat: Responses to Cicero in the imperial period', in Steel, C. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Cicero*, Cambridge University Press.

Murrell, J. (2008), *Cicero and the Roman Republic*, Cambridge University Press.

Steel, C. (ed.) (2013), *The Cambridge Companion to Cicero*, Cambridge University Press.

Tempest, K. (2011), *Cicero. Politics and Persuasion in Ancient Rome*, Bloomsbury Academic.

Vasaly, A. (2013), 'The political impact of Cicero's speeches', in Steel, C. (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Cicero*, Cambridge University Press.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

PS

Source A: Cicero *In Verrem* 1, Chs 1–2

1. The thing which was desired most of all, O Judges, and which alone was thought to be the foremost factor in allaying the unpopularity of your order and the dishonour of the courts, seems, at this crucial time for the republic, to have been offered to and bestowed upon you; not by human counsel, but almost by divine influence. For now, a belief has become established, which is both destructive for the republic, and dangerous for you. The rumour is spreading, not only among the Roman people, but also among foreign nations, that in these courts as they exist now, no wealthy man, however guilty he may be, can possibly be convicted.
2. Now, in this time of crisis for your order and your judgements, when there are men prepared to try to kindle the unpopularity of the senate even further with speeches and the proposal of new laws, Gaius Verres has been brought to trial as a criminal. He is a man already condemned in everyone's opinion by his life and actions, yet acquitted by the magnitude of his wealth, according to his own hope and public boast. I have undertaken this case as prosecutor, O Judges, with the greatest good will and expectation of the Roman people; not so that I might increase the unpopularity of the senate, but so that I might relieve it from the dishonour which I share with it. For I have brought a man before you whose case will enable you to restore the lost reputation of your courts, return to favour with the people of Rome, and satisfy foreign nations: a man, the embezzler of public funds, the abuser of Asia and Pamphyliae, the thief of the city's rights, and the shame and ruin of the province of Sicily.

   1. What official position had Cicero held in Sicily? [1]
   2. How does Cicero create a sense of crisis in these opening lines of *In Verrem* 1? Explain your answer using evidence from the passage. [10]

2.6 Cicero as Correspondent: *Selected Letters*

TOPIC OVERVIEW

- Cicero's correspondents and his relationship to them
- The form, structure and style of Roman letter-writing
- The extent to which letters can be informal or formal in tone, and the choices of language and devices which create this
- Recurring ideas and theme in the letters and their relationship to Cicero's life and political career
- The public or private nature of the letters and their history of publication

The following prescribed sources are covered in this topic:

- Cicero, to Pompey, *Fam.* 5.7; to Atticus, *Att.* 2.18; to Curio, *Fam.* 2.4; to Caelius, *Fam.* 2.11; to Caesar, *Att.* 9.11a; to Atticus, *Att.* 13.40; to Atticus, *Att.* 14.4; to Trebonius, *Fam.* 10.28; to Plancus, *Fam.* 10.6

Don't forget that you will be given credit in the exam if you study extra sources and make relevant use of them in your answers.

Cicero was a prolific letter-writer. Within the small selection of his huge corpus of letters that make up our prescribed sources, we get a sense of how important correspondence was to Cicero, as well an opportunity to see the innermost thoughts of one of the most important political players in the late Roman Republic. The letters form an invaluable source of political, historical and cultural information for this turbulent era. With the mixture of intimate and formal content, we can view both Cicero's publicly sworn political principles and his own personal struggles to reconcile these with the crumbling of the political system in which he believed and for which he would give his life.

CICERO'S CORRESPONDENTS

More than 900 of Cicero's letters have survived, ordered into collections, including the *Epistulae ad Atticum* – Letters to Atticus (his closest friend) and the *Epistulae ad Familiares* – Letters to Friends and Family (including Caesar, Pompey and others). We have already looked at two prescribed letters in detail in Topic 2.4; the remaining nine letters are discussed here.

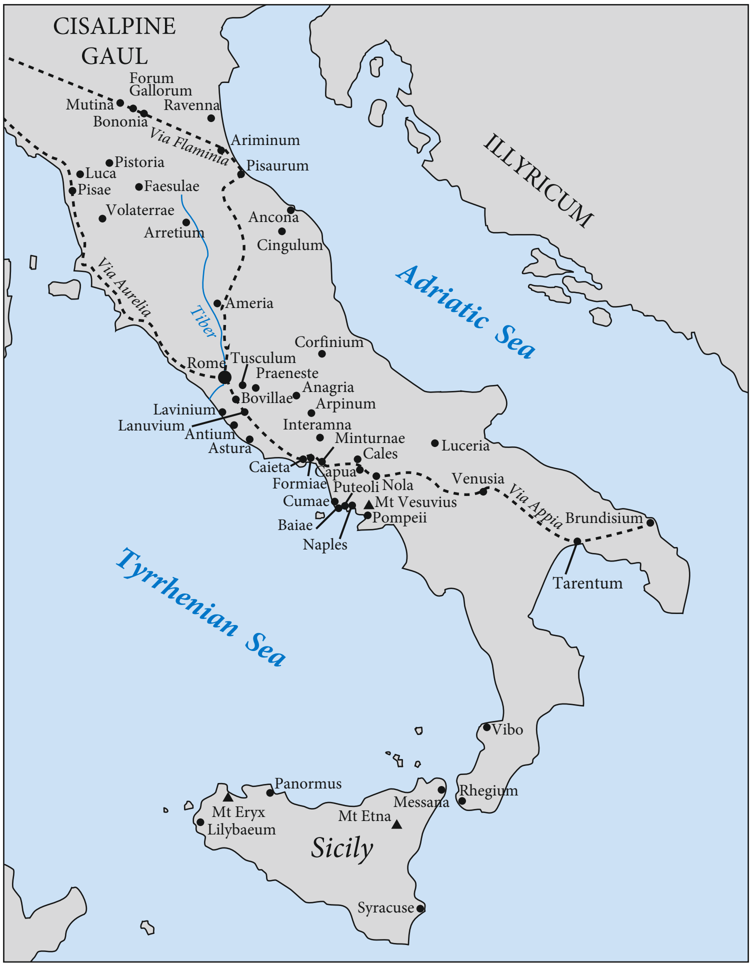
CISALPINE GAUL
Forum Gallorum
Mutina
Ravenna
Bononia
Via Flaminia
Ariminum
Pisaurum
ILLYRICUM
Pistoria
Luca
Pisae
Faesulae
Volaterrae
Arretium
Ancona
Cingulum
Adriatic Sea
Via Aurelia
Tiber
Ameria
Corfinium
Rome
Tusculum
Praeneste
Anagria
Bovillae
Arpinum
Lavinium
Lanuvium
Antium
Astura
Interamna
Minturnae
Luceria
Cales
Caieta
Capua
Venusia
Via Appia
Formiae
Puteoli
Nola
Cumae
Mt Vesuvius
Pompeii
Baiae
Naples
Brundisium
Tarentum
Tyrrhenian Sea
Vibo
Panormus
Rhegium
Messana
Mt Eryx
Lilybaeum
Mt Etna
Sicily
Syracuse

FIGURE 2.24
Map of Cicero's Italy.

Letter-writing illustrated and strengthened the amicitiae between individuals in ancient Roman society and politics. Cicero's dedication to his epistolary output reflects the importance he placed on keeping alive such ties of relationships, both friendly and formal. Cicero's oratory and literary skills were his strength and his sword: he had no family lineage to rely upon for ready-made familial bonds, he had no adequate funds for effective bribery and he could never have commanded the loyalty of legions in the manner of Pompey or Caesar.

Born in 110, Atticus, Cicero's closest friend, was the recipient of a lifetime's correspondence and was privileged with what appear to be the most intimate insights into Cicero's thoughts and beliefs. Titus Pomponius Atticus was given the name Atticus (the 'Athenian') in recognition of his great love for Athens and Greek culture. Cicero met him during his early school years and they remained friends for the rest of Cicero's life. When Cicero furthered his academic study later in Rhodes he was accompanied by Atticus. When Cicero could afford to buy his villa in Tusculum, it was Atticus who enjoyed furnishing the Greek-style 'Academy' Cicero created there – choosing suitable Greek works of art to fill it. A member of the equites, like Cicero, Atticus, however, did not become involved in the public life of politics at Rome. He was to be an extremely useful supporter of Cicero, owning 'a circle of friends larger than any man's in Rome' (Tempest, *Cicero*, p. 82). Their amicitia was also more formally cemented by the marriage of Cicero's brother Quintus to Atticus' sister Pomponia. It is clear from the corpus of letters sent to Atticus that Cicero loved him deeply and valued his friendship above all others. Atticus' political policy of diplomacy and abstention secured him a comfortable life until he died in 32.

One of our prescribed sources is Cicero's letter to Pompey (*Fam*. 5.7) written in 62. For consideration of this letter as a reflection of their relationship, see pp. 142, 172, 174–175, 177. Similarly, a letter (*Att*. 9.11a) to Julius Caesar is included, which is also discussed in detail on pp. 174–176.

We shall also be considering letters from Cicero to Gaius Scribonius Curio (*Fam*. 2.4), Marcus Caelius Rufus (*Fam*. 2.11), Gaius Trebonius (*Fam*. 10.28) and Lucius Munatius Plancus (*Fam*. 10.6). The following sections include more information on each of these correspondents.

FORM, STRUCTURE AND STYLE

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

Morello, in *Writer and Addressee in Cicero's Letters*, p. 198, describes how the form and structure of letters is characterised by the fact that they are:

> 'an interactive genre – one half of a dialogue … It is, indeed, a cliché of epistolary theory that letters are a substitute for a conversation. They anticipate an answer, and … maintain an apparent realism and seek to minimise the sense of geographical separation between writer and addressee.'

While Cicero's letters might differ in style and tone, the 'intense and recurring focus upon the addressee's persona gives them both the epistolary quality and their artistic complexity alike' (p. 207).

When reading Cicero's letters, consider carefully what kind of 'persona' he creates for each of his addressees.

A definite contrast of style stands between some of Cicero's letters to close friends and relatives like Atticus with those letters to, for example, Caesar and Pompey. The differences in formality/informality of style are discussed in more detail below. Many of the nuances of literary style, however, are lost in translation. Grant, in *Cicero. Selected Letters*, p. 23, discusses at length the challenges faced by the translator of Cicero's letters who would wish to write 'contemporary readable English', as Cicero's works are filled with stylistic flourishes unpalatable to a contemporary style such as hyperbole or a string of rhetorical questions. Cicero enjoyed, for example, using Greek quotations to express himself or quote another (particularly in his letters to Atticus) – a stylistic feature that modern translators sometimes convey through the adoption of French or German

rhetorical question a question to make a point; a question that frames the addressee since it presupposes that no one will answer it

Study questions

Read Cicero's letter to Plancus from 43 (*Fam.* 10.6) PS. Plancus was governor of Gallia Comata (northern and central France), later described by the ancient writer Velleius Paterculus as pathologically treacherous – 'a watchful and obsequious timeserver who, by frequent changes of side, was to outlive this whole period of civil war into successful old age under Augustus' (Grant, *Cicero. Selected Letters,* p. 98). Cicero, in Rome, needed to persuade the notoriously slippery Plancus not to swap sides and join Antony.

The letter is divided into the following structure:

1. An update from Rome and assertion of amicitia
2. A threat
3. Advice
4. A threat
5. A reassertion of amicitia

1 Can you identify these five sections in the text?
2 How does Cicero appeal to their existing amicitia?
3 What is the main threat that Cicero points out to Plancus?
4 How many actions does Cicero outline for Plancus in his section on advice? Why do you think Cicero chose this number?
5 How persuasive do you think this is as a structure? Explain your answer.

PRESCRIBED SOURCE

Letter from Cicero to Plancus

Date: 43 (20 March)

Index: *Fam*. 10.6

To: Lucius Munacius Plancus

From: Cicero in Rome

Tone: Formal

Significance: Plancus is 'pathologically treacherous', and Cicero is trying to persuade him as governor of mid and northern Gaul to stand fast against Antony and help out those in Gaul loyal to the senate

Themes:

- Cicero's use of amicitia
- Political pragmatism – 'peace cannot be achieved by merely putting down your weapons'

Read it here: OCR source booklet CW

phrases, as one might in a certain register of writing in English. Cicero tended to avoid such erudite literary frills when writing serious political letters, where the expected and traditional Roman register was one of simple clarity. We shall examine the style, form and structure of individual letters below.

FORMAL AND INFORMAL LETTERS

Letter-writing in ancient Rome was a system of exchange or communication between two people linked by some degree of amicitia. Cicero's letters can thus be categorised relatively straightforwardly into letters to individuals with whom he had close personal ties (informal letters) and those with whom he had or hoped to have a more formal bond of amicitia (formal letters).

Cicero's informal correspondence covered a huge range of topics, but it all served to strengthen ties of friendship. In the Prescribed Sources we see examples of him writing to friends for all sorts of reasons. His relationship with Atticus is extremely important: as he once wrote 'I speak with you as if with myself' (*Att.* 8.14) and indeed the frankness and intimacy with which he appears to share his innermost thoughts and feelings is striking. In 59, when the First Triumvirate was newly established and Cicero was upset by the paralysing effect it had on the workings of the senate, he had written to Atticus in distress:

FIGURE 2.25
A 17th-century romanticised sculpture of Julius Caesar.

PRESCRIBED SOURCE

Letter from Cicero to Atticus (2.18)

Date: 59 (June or July)

Index: *Att.* 2.18

To: Atticus on his way to Epirus

From: Cicero in Rome

Tone: Informal

Significance: Cicero explains how, at the time of the establishment of the First Triumvirate - Caesar, Pompey and Crassus - he has been approached by Caesar to join them, but has turned the offer down

Themes:
- Disempowerment of the senate and people
- Libertas
- Struggle to match his political ideals with practice
- Cicero–Atticus relationship

Read it here: OCR source booklet

> ‘But I don’t care to write any more about politics. I am dissatisfied with myself, and cannot write without the greatest pain.’ **PS**
>
> Cicero, *Att.* 2.18

The simplicity of the prose style – the repetition of the verb in the first person – immediately gives a sense of openness – Cicero is at a loss as to what to do. The language is unambiguous, direct and heartfelt.

> ‘I could wish, or rather ardently desire, that you were here; then I should not want for advice or consolation. But anyway, be ready to fly to me should I call for you.’ **PS**
>
> Cicero, *Att.* 2.18

The language appears devoid of consciously turned stylistic flourish and the content stands in stark contrast to many of his letters in which he readily gives advice or judgement. Such intimate informality appears to portray a vulnerable Cicero only to be found in his letters to close personal friends.

Cicero also writes informally to friends to keep the channels of communication open, feeding his existing bonds of friendship for the sake of keeping his friends close to him. In his letter to Curio of 53 (*Fam.* 2.4), he states he is demonstrating ‘my love for you’ **PS** – he claims he has nothing specific about which to write.

As well as asking for and giving support, advice and love, we see in Cicero’s letters how correspondence with close friends also included often rigorous discussion of politics.

EXAM TIP: SOURCE SKILLS

Letters

Powell, in *Cicero’s Style*, pp. 49–50, discusses the challenge in categorising letters as a formal genre of writing:

> ‘In one sense there is no more essentially written medium than the letter …. On the other hand, casual correspondence can appear to be virtually a transcription of spoken language.’

When trying to identify letters as ‘formal’ or ‘informal’, we should be wary of dividing them into ‘literary artefact’ versus ‘a kind of conversation on paper’. Powell, in tune with many other modern scholars, reminds us how ‘it takes a good deal of artistry to achieve a natural-sounding style in letter writing’.

When discussing the letters of Cicero, focus on the tone or register of the language, the content and stylistic features. Try not to assume one letter is more ‘honest’ than another and consider at all times how useful each letter is as a reliable source of information about the period we are studying.

PRESCRIBED SOURCE

Letter from Cicero to Atticus (13.40)

Date: 45 (7 or 8 August)

Index: *Att.* 13.40

To: Atticus

From: Cicero in Tusculum

Tone: Informal

Significance: Despite being recently 'forgiven' by Caesar for siding with Pompey, Cicero here shows little allegiance to Caesar in this letter to his close friend Atticus

Themes:

- Cicero's cynicism towards Caesar
- The role of the optimates in the assassination of Caesar (lead up)

Read it here: OCR source booklet

Certainly Cicero shared his political outlook with Atticus on a regular basis. In his letter from Tusculum in 45, for example, he mixes political observation with gallows-humour in a sarcastic comment about Julius Caesar:

> 'Indeed? Brutus reports that Caesar has joined the Optimates? Good news! But where is he going to find them – unless he hangs himself?'
>
> Cicero, *Att.* 13.40

Cicero deliberately spent as little time away from Rome as possible in his earlier years, recognising it as the heart of political life and where important changes could happen in a day. When he was therefore forced to leave Rome, his anxiety at being politically 'out of the loop' looms large in his letters. When he was governor in Cilicia in 50, for example, he wrote to Caelius Rufus begging for regular updates from Rome:

> It is surprising how I long for Rome! You cannot believe how I long for my friends, in particular you … I would like you to write carefully about the entire political situation, for I shall regard that which I get from you to be the most trustworthy information.
>
> Cicero, *Fam.* 2.11

Later, in 44, three-and-a-half weeks after the assassination of Julius Caesar, Cicero fled Rome to stay at his villa in Lanuvium. The political climate was tense, fast-moving and extremely dangerous. He wrote to Atticus who was still in Rome, desperate for news of any change in circumstances. Cicero found himself dependent entirely on news from messengers. His frustration is signposted in the opening sentence, with its sarcastic rhetorical question:

PRESCRIBED SOURCE

Letter from Cicero to Caelius

Date: 50 (4 April)

Index: *Fam.* 2.11

To: Marcus Caelius Rufus in Rome

From: Cicero in Laodicea (Cilicia)

Tone: Informal

Significance: Cicero, in Cilicia as governor, writes in friendly terms to Caelius, refusing to send Caelius some free exotic beasts for his spectacles to boost his political profile with the electorate in his campaign for aedileship

Themes:

- Political principles – Cicero will not support Caelius' career financially by exploiting provincial office
- Needs political information from Rome

Read it here: OCR source booklet

PRESCRIBED SOURCE

Letter from Cicero to Atticus (14.4)

Date: 44 (9 or 10 April)

Index: *Att.* 14.4

To: Atticus

From: Cicero in Lanuvium

Tone: Informal

Significance: Cicero begs for political news from Atticus in Rome three-and-a-half weeks after the assassination of Julius Caesar

Themes:

- Cicero's reliance on correspondence for information in Rome
- Cicero's philosophical politics are proved wrong about libertas; idealism versus pragmatism
- Full support given to the act of assassination

Read it here: OCR source booklet

> Now, what do you think I hear in Lanuvium? In contrast, I suspect there in Rome you hear news every day … If you have any news (for I expect you hear some every day) send it to me immediately. If you have nothing, nevertheless do not interrupt our custom. I shall not.
>
> Cicero, *Att.* 14.4

The language of desperation is clear. In this last quote we see Cicero employ imperatives – 'send it to me … do not interrupt our custom'. The language is one of insistence, the vocabulary of urgency –'immediately', and the repetition of 'every day'. It is unambiguous – concluded by the abrupt final sentence which is short and direct – 'I shall not.' Cicero's more formal letter-writing tends to be reserved for people to whom he is less close personally, but with whom he needs to conduct serious business. It too, like his informal correspondence, focuses hard on amicitia: we see him not only building upon ties of friendship, but forging new relationships, as well as attempting to leverage existing bonds for political ends. The choice of language, the style and the very composed structure of these letters is striking – we see Cicero at his most deliberate and persuasive.

In 62, Cicero wrote to Pompey. This was in response to a brief letter from Pompey in which he had said little to Cicero about his consulship the previous year. Pompey had triumphed in Asia at the time, and many have judged the letter he presumably sent to Cicero to be harbouring resentment at Cicero's fixation with his own success (particularly regarding the Catilinarian conspiracy, see p. 140), and perhaps at Cicero's opposition to the land reform bill of Rullus, which would have benefitted Pompey's veterans (see pp. 140–141). It is an excellent example of the role of letters in attempting to forge new ties, building amicitia from relatively little common ground.

> The private letter to me contained a somewhat slight expression of your affection, yet I can assure you it gave me pleasure … I feel no doubt that even if my extraordinary enthusiasm on your behalf has failed to unite you to me, the interests of the state will certainly create a mutual attachment and coalition between us … You … will find it easy to admit me … into association in politics and friendship.
>
> Cicero, *Fam.* 5.7

The plentiful use of first- and second-person pronouns throughout the text succeeds in bringing Cicero and Pompey together if only in the abstract; the reference to Pompey's letter allows Cicero to demonstrate that he is building upon some element of friendship that has already been encouraged implicitly by Pompey's own correspondence with him. With little other common ground, Cicero appeals to Pompey's love of Rome and care for the welfare of the state to form an alliance with him. Cicero – the great orator – needed association with the hero of the hour – Pompey – with his military brilliance and popular backing. To that end, and with Pompey away from Rome, only a letter could build successful channels of communication.

Cicero's letter to Caesar in March 49 adopted a similarly formal style, but the import of the subject matter and the fact that Cicero intended for it to be published (and for the letter therefore to act as an all-important public statement of Cicero's own position) meant that the prose is even more formal and structured. Civil war had broken out, Caesar had asked Cicero to meet him in Rome and Cicero was staying at his villa in Formiae, unable to decide what course of action to take. Despite being appalled by Pompey's decision to leave Italy and gather forces in Greece, Cicero decided to take this opportunity to try to reconcile the two leaders, Caesar and Pompey. This letter shows Cicero at his most articulate and careful (see Source Quotation).

Again, Cicero's letter to Caesar is liberally sprinkled with personal pronouns at every opportunity, and Cicero appeals to common friends such as 'our friend Furnius' – it is the text of an unfolding conversation. By carefully referring to specific words and phrases from Caesar's own letter, Cicero is establishing his authority to his readership and showing how Caesar is in need of Cicero's own skills, despite his military power. In terms of structure, Cicero reaffirms the amicitia that exists already between himself and Caesar, then declares his own neutral stand in the outbreak of the civil war and makes a point of showing sympathy with Caesar's insulted feelings at the infringement of his rights. By opening his letter with references to Caesar's own letter, Cicero reminds Caesar that he has first approached Cicero for something, giving Cicero an edge in the forthcoming negotiation. He then goes on to say, reasonably, that he (Cicero) should be allowed to carry out decently the duties incumbent upon him in his amicitia with Pompey too. He aims to act as an agent 'for restoring the harmony between you two and among our citizen body'. The argument is balanced – 'I did X for you, so too should I do X for Pompey'. It also has a common appeal – all three of them surely wished for 'harmony … among our citizen body'? The rhetoric is a clear and public statement of Cicero's aims at putting the Republic first, without blaming any one individual for the crisis it is in.

SOURCE QUOTATION

PS

> When I received your letter from our friend Furnius, in which you asked me to come to Rome, I was not so much surprised that you wanted my 'advice and status', but I asked myself, however, what you meant by 'influence and help'. Hope, however, led me to think that, due to your singular wisdom and outstanding statesmanship, you might want to pursue negotiations for peace and civic harmony. For this end, I consider myself suitable enough by nature and personality. If it is so, if you care to preserve our friend Pompey and reconcile him to the republic, you will find no-one better suited to the cause than I am. When speaking with him and the senate I always advocated peace at the first opportunity. When arms were taken up, I had no part in the war. My considered opinion is that the war involved an infringement of your rights, in view of the opposition, by envious and unfriendly people, to an honour conferred upon you by the Roman people. But as then I not only supported your position myself but urged others to come to your aid, so at the present moment I am strongly moved by consideration for the position of Pompey. It is some years since I chose you two to cultivate above all others, as what you still are, my very dear friends.
>
> Cicero, *Att.* 9.11a

PRESCRIBED SOURCE

Letter from Cicero to Pompey

Date: 62 (summer)

Index: *Fam.* 5.7

To: Pompey in Asia

From: Cicero in Rome

Tone: Formal

Significance: In the year following his consulship, Cicero writes ahead of Pompey's return to Rome (having acquired huge swathes of territory for the Roman state, including Asia Minor, Syria and Crete), and mentions his successful crushing of the Catilinarian conspiracy

Themes:
- Cicero–Pompey relationship
- Appeal to shared love of Rome

Read it here: OCR source booklet

CW

PRESCRIBED SOURCE

Letter from Cicero to Julius Caesar

Date: 49 (19 March)

Index: *Att.* 9.11a

To: Julius Caesar

From: Cicero in Formiae

Tone: Amicable but formal

Significance: Cicero responds to Caesar's invitation to come to Rome to meet with him, to use his `advice and status' as well as his `influence' and 'help'; Pompey has left with the senate for Brundisium

Themes:
- Cicero’s aims for harmony
- Cicero’s proclaimed neutrality throughout – how he felt Caesar’s aggrieved behaviour was fair, but now appeals to fair treatment for Pompey
- Cicero’s relationship with Caesar – careful to claim openly his friendship with both sides

Read it here: OCR source booklet CW

RECURRING THEMES AND IDEAS IN CICERO’S CORRESPONDENCE

One common theme in Cicero’s letters was his political idealism regarding libertas, since he used his skill in letter-writing to persuade both the powerful and his close friends to act towards the attainment of peace and harmony. This was, he believed, threatened by the loss of individual libertas resulting from political change. In a letter to Atticus in 59 he mourned the servitude that all were now living in due to the arrangements of the triumvirs to allocate extraordinary power to themselves without recourse to the senate: ‘there is no hope of the magistrates, or indeed private citizens, ever being free’ (*Att.* 2.18) PS. Again, in 44, after the death of Caesar, Cicero is perhaps naively shocked to discover that removing the tyrant did not immediately and necessarily liberate the Republic: ‘On my part I am sorry that what has happened is unprecedented in a state: that freedom has been restored without a free state’ (*Att.* 14.4) PS. In his letter to Trebonius in 43 he refers to how ‘my intense pleading gave the Roman people hope of recovering their freedom’ (*Fam.* 10.28) PS. When urging Plancus to do the ‘right thing’ in 43, he insists ‘you join yourself with the freedom of the Roman People and the authority of the Senate’ (*Fam.* 10.6) PS – it is a letter not just about amicitia but also about broader Roman values.

Closely linked to the theme of libertas, Cicero’s letters also refer regularly to love of Rome and the duty of the individual to the state. Sometimes he describes his own outstanding patriotism towards Rome; for example in his letter to Pompey in 62, he boasts

PRESCRIBED SOURCE

Letter from Cicero to Trebonius

Date: 43 (*c.* 2 February)

Index: *Fam.* 10.28

To: Gaius Trebonius (governor in Asia)

From: Cicero in Rome

Tone: Amiable and formal

Significance: Cicero urges Trebonius to ally himself with the Republican cause

Themes:
- Idealism versus reality
- Cicero and Octavian
- Cicero and Mark Antony
- Use of metaphor – Ides of March = feast
- Cicero as restorer of the Republic (his delivery of a *Philippic* in the senate in Dec. 44, rallying them all)

Read it here: OCR source booklet

unreservedly about his performance as consul – 'But let me tell you; what I did for the country is approved by the judgement and testimony of the whole world', and 'When you return home, you will know the great wisdom and courage I showed' (*Fam.* 5.7); elsewhere in the letter he appeals to patriotism as a common value shared with Pompey, talking of 'the interests of the state' and 'for the sake of … the republic'. In 49, with the advent of civil war, and the week before he wrote to Caesar (appealing there also to the 'national interest'), Cicero wrote a heart-wrenching letter to Atticus (*Att.* 9.4, see pp. 146, 147 in Topic 4) philosophising about the political dilemmas by which he was being challenged. Each question searches for a practical solution to an ethical and/or political problem thrown up by tyranny. The final question, so clearly a personal and emotional one for Cicero, asks when, if ever, one can absolve oneself of one's patriotic duty. We know from Cicero's *Philippics* against Antony in 44–43 that Cicero, exhausted emotionally by years of unsuccessful fighting for the Republican cause, did not give up. He took pains to tell Trebonius in February 43 how on 20 December 44 he

> resumed my old spirit, which you and that most patriotic citizen, your father, have always praised and loved … I reviewed the whole constitutional situation and spoke with intense spirit rather than eloquence. I restored to the weary, wilting senate its ancient and traditional valour. That day, my intense pleading gave the Roman people hope of recovering their freedom. From that time, I have devoted every moment not only to thinking about the Republic, but being active in it.
>
> Cicero, *Fam.* 10.28

Cicero's love of the Roman Republic pervaded his correspondence.

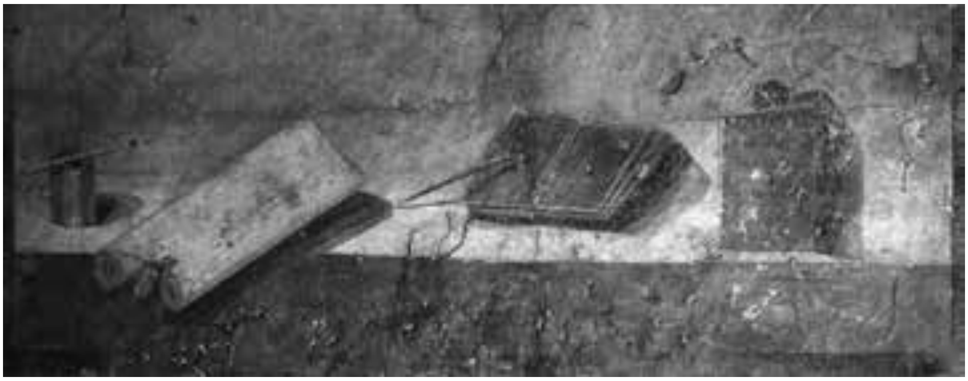

FIGURE 2.26
A fresco from Pompeii showing Roman writing implements.

MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

Stowers (*Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, p. 19) has identified our modern interpretation of private versus public letters as inherited from the 19-century Romantic movement and unfamiliar to the Roman correspondent. He argues that distinction between 'warm, personal, spontaneous, artless, common-private-friendly letters and impersonal, conventional, artificial literary letters is extremely misleading'.

When you have read through the Prescribed Source letters, consider the degree to which you would agree with this statement.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LETTERS

The notion that Cicero's letters fall into two categories – 'private' or 'public' – has been questioned by recent scholarship. While the style of writing to intimate friends is sometimes less formal than that when writing to public officials on matters of state, the public/private division is perhaps unhelpful when looking at Roman letters.

There is no doubt, however, that a very small number of them were written with the intention of being read by more than one person, or indeed being published for broader consumption – see, for example, Cicero's letter to Julius Caesar in 49 (discussed above).

A letter's 'privacy' of course relied upon its successful delivery to the intended recipient. In a society and time where there was no established postal service for general consumption, correspondents had to rely on private messengers or couriers. The administration of the vast territory of the Roman state meant that such people were needed to carry instructions and reports to and from Rome between military officials, governors and the senate. Living in a period of political unrest, Cicero often alluded to his need for messengers he could trust to deliver some of his letters to, for example, Atticus, which may have been intimate in tone, but would regularly contain potentially dangerous political views if read by the wrong person. The logistics of travel themselves should also be acknowledged – letters could only travel up to about fifty miles a day. Cicero's letter from Rome to his friend Trebonius the governor in Asia (*Fam*. 10.28) PS gives his correspondent an update on political progress in the capital; unfortunately, Trebonius had died in January 43 – a month before Cicero even penned the letter.

Cicero's letter to Curio in 53 (*Fam*. 2.4) PS consists of a discussion about the art of letter- writing. Despite later joining Caesar in the civil war, Cicero writes to him at this time as a friend. Politically, the situation was tense: Pompey, Caesar and Crassus had been chasing their ambitions empowered by their formal amicitia of the triumvirate; Crassus died in 53 at the battle at Carrhae; there were no successful consular elections for the following year and the streets of Rome were overrun by violent and opposing mobs. Cicero fills this letter bemoaning the lack of content for a letter. He identifies three good types of potential content:

- information
- intimate and humorous
- serious and profound

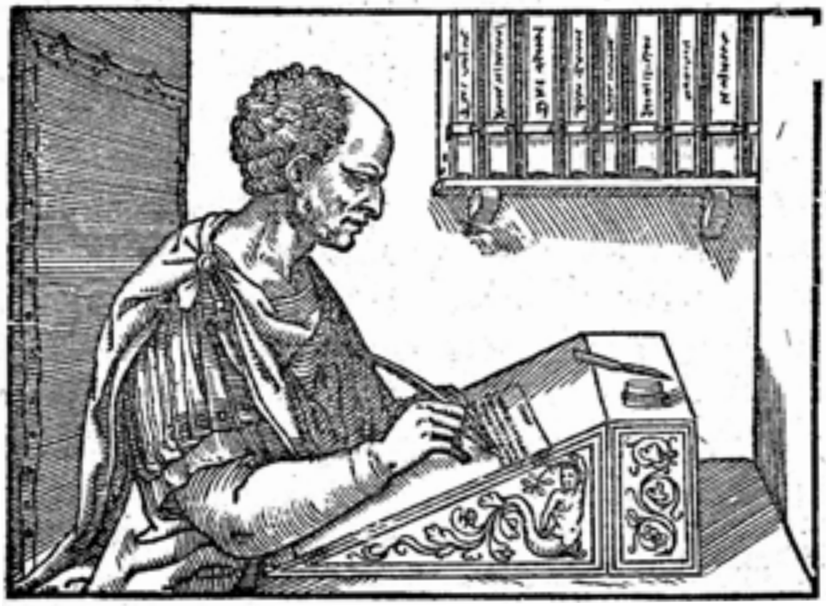

FIGURE 2.27
Cicero writing a letter, in a 16th-century woodcut.

All of these are considered suitable for writing informally. The first is not useful in this instant, he says, as he has nothing new to report. The second might imply he send Curio jokes, but the severity of the times makes that impossible. The third would imply politics, but as Cicero writes:

> 'on this subject my case is this: I do not dare to write what I feel, and I do not wish to write what I don't feel.' PS

We are reminded of the danger inherent in speaking out through a letter, however 'private'. In some ways this letter about the impossibility of finding suitable content for a letter can be viewed as a strong statement by Cicero about the curtailing of his freedom to speak honestly in the political climate of 53.

PRESCRIBED SOURCE

Letter from Cicero to Curio

Date: 53 (*c.* middle of)

Index: *Fam.* 2.4

To: Gaius Scribonius Curio

From: Cicero in Rome

Tone: Informal

Significance: Cicero appears to be writing to Curio about having nothing to write. The political situation, he implies, makes freedom of speech impossible.

Themes:

- The art of letter-writing
- The stifling of freedom of speech due to the political situation

Read it here: OCR source booklet CW

THE PUBLICATION OF CICERO'S LETTERS

Most modern scholars agree that Cicero wrote the majority of his correspondence without thought of its publication; in other words, the majority of Cicero's letters were written as private correspondence, although he did not rule out the publication of some of them at some point.

The collection of Cicero's letters addressed to friends and members of his family was created and published by his freedman and once-secretary – Tiro – soon after Cicero died in December 43. The letters to Atticus were published some time later, collated and published by Atticus.

While the majority of Cicero's extant letters cluster around the most challenging periods of his life, for example, his forced exile or the early months of 49, the letters when published were grouped not into chronological order or theme, but according to

EXPLORE FURTHER

> There is no collection of my letters in existence: but Tiro has something like seventy. Moreover, there are some to be got from you. I ought to look through and correct them. They shall not be published till I have done so.
>
> Cicero, *Att.* 16.5

Cicero makes a number of references to the publication of letters. Do you think this comment in his letter to Atticus implies Cicero intends to publish all his letters? What difference might that make to how we read some of them?

addressee. They are sub-grouped in rough chronological order. This suggests that rather than building up a biographical picture of the author, the published letters were intended to reflect Cicero's relationships both formal and informal, intimate and grand, reminding us that Cicero was a Roman product of his acquaintances and a master of communication.

TOPIC REVIEW

These questions should draw on your knowledge of the whole topic, so think carefully about the different things you have learned (check the Topic Overview on p. 166)

1. In what ways was letter-writing important to Cicero's political life?
2. How much of a window onto Cicero's political idealism do we get from reading this sample selection of letters? Please refer to the texts of the letters for evidence.
3. Are some of Cicero's letters more trustable historical sources than others? Explain your view with direct reference to texts of the letters.

Further Reading

Beard, M. (2006), 'Ciceronian correspondences: Making a book out of letters', in Wiseman, T. P. (ed.) *Classics in Progress*, New Edition, OUP/British Academy.

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Morello, R. (2013), 'Writer and addressee in Cicero's letters', in Steel, C. (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Cicero*, Cambridge University Press.

Murrell, J. (2008), *Cicero and the Roman Republic*, Cambridge University Press.

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PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Source A: To Atticus 9.11a: To Caesar

Formiae, 19th or 20th of March 49 BC

When I received your letter from our friend Furnius, in which you asked me to come to Rome, I was not so much surprised that you wanted my 'advice and status', but I asked myself, however, what you meant by 'influence and help'. Hope, however, led me to think that, due to your singular wisdom and outstanding statesmanship, you might want to pursue negotiations for peace and civic harmony. For this end, I consider myself suitable enough by nature and personality. If it is so, if you care to preserve our friend Pompey and reconcile him to the republic, you will find no one better suited to the cause than I am. When speaking with him and the senate I always advocated peace at the first opportunity. When arms were taken up, I had no part in the war. My considered opinion is that the war involved an infringement of your rights, in view of the opposition, by envious and unfriendly people, to an honour conferred upon you by the Roman people. But as then I not only supported your position myself, but urged others to come to your aid, so at the present moment I am strongly moved by consideration for the position of Pompey. It is some years since I chose you two to cultivate above all others, as what you still are, my very dear friends.

Accordingly I ask you, I beg and implore you will all my heart, to spare some time, amidst your great concerns, to consider how by virtue of your kindness, I can best behave well, gratefully and loyally to Pompey, so as to remember my obligation to him. If this request concerned only me, I should still hope you would grant my request; I believe, however, that your honour and the republic is also at stake as I – a friend of peace and of you both – should be preserved by you as the most appropriate agent for restoring harmony between you two and among our the citizen body.

1. 'Cicero's political principles inevitably drove him to Pompey's side in the Civil War of 49 BC.' To what extent do you agree with this statement? You may use Source A and your understanding of Cicero's political beliefs as starting points and should justify your response? [20]
2. How consistent are Cicero's political principles across the range of his correspondence that you have read? Justify your response. [30]

What to Expect in the A Level Exam for Politics of the Late Republic

This chapter aims to show the types of questions you are likely to get in the written examination. It offers some advice on how to answer the questions and will help you avoid common errors.

THE EXAMINATION

This component of the A Level Classical Civilisation examination is designed to test your knowledge, understanding and evaluation of Politics in the Late Republic. The examination is worth 75 marks and lasts 1 hour and 45 minutes. This represents 30% of the total marks for the A Level.

There are two Assessment Objectives in your A Level, and questions will be designed to test these areas. These Assessment Objectives are outlined in the table below together with the total number of marks available for each on the paper:

	Assessment objective	**Marks**
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: • literature, visual/material culture and classical thought • how sources and ideas reflect, and influence, their cultural contexts • possible interpretations of sources, perspectives and ideas by different audiences and individuals.	35
AO2	Critically analyse, interpret and evaluate literature, visual/material culture and classical thought, using evidence to make substantiated judgements and produce coherent and reasoned arguments.	40

EXAM STRUCTURE AND QUESTION TYPES

The exam is divided into two sections, Section A and Section B. Section A has four types of question, while Section B has just one type of question. The question types are as follows:

- a number of short answer questions (5 marks in total)
- 10 mark stimulus question

- 10-mark ideas question
- 20-mark shorter essay question
- 30-mark essay question

Try to plan your time well. The shorter essay question and the essay question together make up 50 of the 75 marks available, and so you should aim to spend the majority of your time on these two questions.

Section A
SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS AND STIMULUS QUESTION

The paper will start with a passage from one of your prescribed texts by Cicero. The questions following it will be formatted as follows:

- one or more short answer questions relating to the passage (worth 2 or 3 marks in total)
- a 10-mark stimulus question related to this passage

For example, you might be given the following letter to Pompey in 62 BC as a stimulus passage, which will be named Source A.

To His Friends 5.7: To Pompey
Rome, 62 BC

> From your official dispatch, I – along with everyone else – take incredible pleasure. For you have given us that strong hope of peace of which I, trusting so completely in you, was assuring everyone. But I must inform you that your old enemies – now posing as your friends – have received a stunning blow by this despatch, and, being disappointed in the high hopes they were entertaining, are thoroughly distressed. The private letter to me contained a somewhat slight expression of your affection, yet I can assure you it gave me pleasure. There is, however, nothing in which I find greater satisfaction than in the knowledge of serving my friends. And, if on any occasion I do not meet with an adequate return, I am not at all sorry to have the balance of kindness in my favour. I feel no doubt that even if my extraordinary enthusiasm on your behalf has failed to unite you to me, the interests of the state will certainly create a mutual attachment and coalition between us.
>
> To leave you in no doubt of what I missed in your letter, I will write with the candour which my own disposition and our common friendship demand. I did expect some congratulation in your letter on my achievements, both for the sake of the ties between us and that of the republic. This I presume to have been omitted by you for fear of hurting anyone's feelings. But let me tell you; what I did for the salvation of the country is approved by the judgment and testimony of the whole world. When you return home, you will know the great wisdom and courage I showed, and you – a much greater man than Africanus was – will find it easy to admit me – one who is not much inferior to Laelius – into association in politics and friendship.

An example of a short answer question following this would be:

Question: Where was Pompey sending his 'official dispatch' from? (line 1) [1]

Answer: One from: Asia (Minor) / (Near/Middle) East / Turkey [1]

As you can see here, the short answer questions will test your knowledge or understanding of something related to the stimulus passage and will only be AO1. There is no analysis or evaluation required.

An example of a 10-mark stimulus question might be:

Question: What impression of Cicero's relationship with Pompey does this letter create? Explain your answer with reference to Source A. [10]

Of the 10 marks, 5 are available for AO1 and 5 for AO2. AO1 marks are awarded for the selection of material from the source, AO2 marks for the interpretation, analysis or evaluation of this material. These questions are marked according to a stimulus question marking grid, which you can view on the OCR website.

Answer: As the marking grid indicates, you should aim to make a range of points which give clear and thoughtful analysis and are backed up with good supporting evidence from the passage. Here are examples of two points you could make:

Point 1: Cicero wants Pompey to think of him as an ally and supporter, as he says 'you have given us that strong hope of peace of which I, trusting so completely in you, was assuring everyone'.

Point 2: Pompey is maybe less enthusiastic or warm about Cicero, as Cicero makes a point of telling Pompey that he had been expecting 'some congratulation' in Pompey's letter on his (Cicero's) 'achievements'.

In both examples, notice that there is analysis which is supported by evidence from the passage. Try to make your arguments as clear and distinct as possible, and always back them up with evidence from the passage. Note that you do not always need to quote directly from the passage, but can paraphrase from it or simply refer to a part of it.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS AND IDEAS QUESTION

There will then be a sentence in **bold type,** which will introduce an idea or concept you have studied. The questions following it will be structured as follows:

- one or two short answer questions related to the idea introduced (worth 2 or 3 marks in total, adding up to a combined total of 5 marks with the earlier short answer questions)
- a 10-mark question related to the idea introduced in the initial sentence in bold

For example, you might be given the following as an 'idea' sentence:

From approximately 60 BC to 53 BC Julius Caesar and two other men acted as an unofficial, political alliance often referred to as the 'First Triumvirate'.

An example of a short answer question following this would be:

Question: Who were the **two** other members of the Triumvirate? [2]

Answer: Pompey (the Great) [1]; Crassus [1]

As you can see here, the short answer questions will again only be AO1 and will test your knowledge or understanding of something related to the idea introduced. There is no analysis or evaluation required.

An example of a 10-mark ideas question would be:

Question: Explain what actions taken by Caesar, while a member of the Triumvirate, would be in keeping with the ideals of a *popularis*. [10]

Of the 10 marks available, 5 are for AO1 and 5 for AO2. AO1 marks are awarded for knowledge and understanding relating to the idea introduced, AO2 marks are awarded for the interpretation, analysis or evaluation of this material. These questions are marked according to an ideas question marking grid, which you can view on the OCR website.

Answer: This should be answered in a very similar way to the stimulus 10-mark question. You should again try to make a range of distinct points. This time, each of them should be backed up by factual evidence you have learnt in your studies. Here are two examples:

Point 1: Land reform and the distribution of land was a *populares* concern, and Caesar appealed directly to the people, bypassing the senate in order to get his agrarian laws passed.

Point 2: Caesar, as a member of the Triumvirate, did not support Cicero when he was targeted by the Leges Clodiae and allowed him to be exiled. This was partly in response to a decision of Cicero as consul in 63 BC, when he had the Catilinarian conspirators executed without trial – an action at odds with *populares* principles.

In both these examples, one part shows factual knowledge, the other clear analysis.

SHORTER ESSAY QUESTION

The final question in Section A will be the 20-mark shorter essay question. The title of this essay will allow you to draw on material you have used in either the stimulus question or the ideas question above. Of the 20 marks available, 10 are for AO1 and 10 for AO2. This question has its own tailored marking grid, which you can view on the OCR website.

An example of such a question might be as follows:

Question: 'Cicero and Caesar were always in disagreement and opposed to each other.' To what extent do you think this is a fair assessment? You may use Source A and your knowledge of the aims and ideas of the First Triumvirate as starting points and should justify your response. [20]

When you **plan** your answer to this question, it might be a good idea to write down some key points of factual evidence which you are going to use for AO1. Note that the question invites you to use Source A as a starting point and also ideas about the First Triumvirate; try to refer directly to relevant words, phrases or ideas in the passage. You might look to draw on the following factual evidence:

- Cicero's belief in *concordia ordinum*
- Caesar opposed the death penalty for the Catilinarian conspirators (possibly referred to in Source A)
- Caesar became a member of the First Triumvirate and was later dictator
- Caesar supported Cicero's enemy Clodius
- Cicero's exclusion from the Conference of Luca
- Cicero sided with Pompey in the civil war (you may wish to draw upon Source A)
- Cicero and Caesar's exchange of letters in 49 BC

After this, you should look for any key words and phrases in the question. The word 'always' is important here as it is a bold statement suggesting an unchanging relationship between Cicero and Caesar. The phrase 'to what extent' is also important. This asks you to evaluate the degree to which you think their relationship was hostile. It may be that you think that sometimes Cicero and Caesar disagreed, but that sometimes they did not. The phrase 'to what extent' gives you the opportunity to assess a full range of evidence, so that the answer need not simply be 'they always disagreed', but instead you can offer a more balanced point of view if you would prefer to. You may then wish to structure your essay to reflect the balance of views, for example first discussing a range of evidence that backs up the statement, followed by evidence that you think undermines the statement. Remember always when balancing an argument, you must still directly answer the essay question set and be clear of this in your introduction and conclusion. The marking grid indicates that you will be marked on the overall range and quality of your arguments and of your supporting evidence.

Section B
ESSAY QUESTION

In Section B you will be given a choice of two essays. **You should only do one essay.** The essay is out of 30 marks, with 10 marks for AO1 and 20 marks for AO2 (this question also has its own tailored marking grid, which you can download from the OCR website). However, this does not mean that you should be aiming to give evidence and evaluation in exactly that ratio. A good essay is likely to have more evaluation than evidence in any case, and so you should just aim to write the best essay you can, where you back up your arguments with evidence from your studies. What you should avoid doing, however, is over-narrating: telling the examiner about the content of a prescribed source rather than analysing it according to the question.

The first thing you need to do is to decide which question to choose. Make sure that you read both questions carefully and think about what is being asked. It is a common mistake for candidates to read the questions too quickly, missing essential elements out. For example, consider the following question:

Question: Evaluate how far the key players in Roman politics, between 63 BC and 44 BC, were motivated by ambition rather than ideals. Discuss at least **two** key players. [30]

To answer this question, you must keep three points in mind: you must discuss **at least two** key players, so planning and timing your essay is crucial to ensure you do not focus too heavily on one person; you must focus upon the period specified (here – between 63 and 44 BC); and you must evaluate the actions of all the key players you choose, considering for each of them whether they were motivated more by ambition than ideals. You may then compare them to draw a conclusion or opinion on the question of whether ambition was a stronger motivation than idealism.

When you make your choice about which essay to attempt, ensure that you have read each question carefully and be very sure about what each one is asking for. It may be that you think that you could answer both. This is a good problem to have! Make a clear decision one way or another and then stick with it.

Try to ensure that you give your essay a clear structure. Draw up a plan paragraph by paragraph or argument by argument. While it is a good idea to have a brief introduction and conclusion to the essay, try not to make these too long. Your introduction should briefly outline the key issues, and the line you are going to take, while the conclusion should draw together the key points you have made. To score good marks in AO1, make sure you choose a range of factual evidence for **at least two** of your key players. To score good marks in AO2, make sure you examine the issue and weigh up your arguments carefully. You will want to make a variety of points, and you may find that there are arguments on both sides.

Modern Scholarship

In this essay question, you are required to show knowledge of modern scholarship in your answer. This requirement of the exam is supported in this textbook by the Modern Scholarship boxes and the suggested Further Reading sections at the end of topics. The OCR rubric says that ‘Learners are expected to make use of scholarly views, academic approaches and sources to support their argument’. It is essential that you build in such material in order to do well on this question. How should you do this?

First of all, you of course need to read more widely about the topic. In this book, you have been given suggestions for articles and books to read on a variety of topics relating to the Politics of the Late Republic. Try to follow up as many as possible, and take notes about some of the key arguments that scholars make. It is especially interesting when two authors disagree with each other on a topic. When referring to the view of a scholar, you need not quote them directly, although if you are able to remember a few words that they have written accurately, then that will be very impressive. However, it may be that you refer to a general argument that they put forward in a book, an article or a chapter.

Let us take an example relating to the question above. You may wish to provide a counter-example to the idea posited in the essay question and talk about Cato the Younger's apparent motivation by idealism rather than ambition. One modern scholar who has focussed on this statesman is Pamela Marin in her book *Blood in the Forum* (Continuum, 2000). Marin take pains to identify evidence for Cato doggedly following his ideals sometimes even to his own detriment, for example, his refusal to resort to bribery during his consular election campaigning. Marin also, however, analyses this same Cato as a man who could see the potential power the status of tribune had to offer him, perhaps not necessarily demonstrating him to be ambitious rather than idealistic, but possibly ambitious *for* his ideals. This is an interesting point as it questions whether the two initial sources of motivation raised by the essay question – ambition and ideals – are in fact in opposition at all. You may wish to reflect more on this view in your essay.

Above all, make use of modern scholarship relevant to the question you are answering. You will get more credit for using one or two references to modern scholarship well than you will for mentioning many scholarly views just for the sake of it. To use the scholarship well you should think carefully about why they are supporting your argument or showing a different argument, and make it clear why you are including them. You might want to agree or disagree with the scholarly view, in which case you will need to explain why you do so. You may not remember everything about the scholarship you have read, but if you ensure the examiner understands what you are using and why, this will strengthen your argument. Using modern scholarship in this way gives you a skill that is crucial at university level in many different subjects because engaging with what other people have thought about a particular topic enriches your own understanding.

GLOSSARY

Component-specific glossaries can be found on the Companion Website.

aedile an optional magistracy; responsible for the provision of games and public services in Rome

amicitia (pl. **amicitiae)** a system of family alliances established to consolidate and further the success of influential Romans

anaphora a word or phrase that is repeated at the start of neighbouring clauses for emphatic effect

andron a room on the ground floor of a Greek house which was only used by the *kyrios* and his guests at a *symposium*. There would be couches around the walls

apatheia ‘immunity to pain’; this is the desired state of mind for a Stoic; to achieve this, a Stoic must place reason above the natural desires of the body

apostrophe a direct address to a third party to break up the narrative voice

aretē ‘virtue’ or ‘goodness’; this is a difficult concept to define, but it is central to several ancient Greek philosophies; in Stoicism, it is the way of life attained by the complete subjugation of bodily desires

ascent the culmination of a philosophical argument, in which the philosopher draws together the strands of their argument to produce a reasoned and impassioned conclusion

asyndeton a lack of conjunctions in a list to give the description intensity

augur a state religious official at Rome who could ‘read’ the flights of birds (known as ‘taking the auspices’), interpreting them as divine favour or disapproval of major decisions of state

boni men considered to be ideal statesmen: well educated, traditional, patriotic and experienced enough in politics to accept responsibility for making good decisions for the moral and political health of the state

censor two officials elected by the centuriate assembly for eighteen months who were responsible for the census and supervising public morality

centuriate assembly a voting body of citizens organised into 193 voting ‘centuries’ (determined by wealth), responsible for electing consuls and praetors

chorus (pl. **choruses)** a number of performers singing together, which is a familiar feature of Greek drama. Choruses would also perform poems/songs at religious rituals or weddings

clients citizens who were bound by loyalty to a wealthy patron to support him in all his public interests (e.g. in elections) in return for support and resources

concordia ordinum literally, ‘the agreement of the orders’: a political ideal held by Cicero in which the original structures of the Republican constitution were encouraged to flourish and continue, with the aristocracy and equites united in the common good of governing the Roman state

consul one of the two leading senators who presided over the senate

cum dignitate otium literally, ‘leisure with prestige’: used in a wider sense by Cicero to refer to an absolute social, religious, legal and political status quo

cum manu ‘with power’; this denotes a marriage where the husband gained manus over his wife

cursus honorum a system of political offices in the senate in Rome, elected annually

dactylic hexameter an ancient poetic metre in which a line consists of six metrical feet of similar lengths; a poem written entirely in this metre is also referred to as a ‘dactylic hexameter’ poem

dictator a position of state established in periods of military crisis and awarded to one man by the consuls for six months only

didactic poetry poetry which is intended to teach a lesson to its readers; instructional poetry

dignitas acknowledged dignity or prestige, associated particularly with social, religious and political standing

dominatio a form of autocracy or despotism, anathema to the Roman concept of a Republican state

dowry a financial arrangement made between the families of the bride and groom

elegiac couplets an ancient poetic metre which consisted of two adjacent lines; the first is a line of dactylic hexameter, the second is a shorter pentameter line (with only five metrical feet), which tends to be indented when printed; this is the traditional metre of love elegy

equites a rank in the Roman class system which grew in wealth and status through occupations in commerce and finance

erastes (pl. **erastai)** the adult in a pederastic relationship (in English ‘lover’)

eromenos (pl. **eromenoi)** the boy in a pederastic relationship (in English ‘beloved’)

eros Sappho uses this word for ‘love’. She also uses the adjective and verb formed from this word. In English we should think of eros as meaning passion or desire as well as love. In Poem 112, the bridegroom sees ‘eros’ on the face of his new bride

First Triumvirate a private alliance formed in 60 between Julius Caesar, Pompey the Great and Marcus Licinius Crassus enabling each of the three men to achieve their personal political short-term goals. It lasted until Crassus’s death in 53.

genre a type or kind of artwork into which many can be grouped; consider film genres such as horror, comedy, drama, romance etc.

governor men selected from an elite group of senators who had previously served as praetors or consuls, responsible for the smooth running, safety and taxation of a province of the state

gymnasium (pl. **gymnasia)** an area where men would meet to exercise naked. The word ‘gymnasium’ is derived from *gymnos*, Greek for ‘naked’

homoerotic same-sex relationship. It is often difficult for modern audiences to appreciate the complexities involved in same-sex relationships in ancient Greece. Therefore, relationships will be referred to as ‘homoerotic’ rather than ‘homosexual’

hyperbole (adj. **hyperbolic)** exaggeration used for literary effect

imperium the power invested in a consul giving him the military command of the state army

infamis (pl. **infames)** a person who, because of their profession or conduct, held no legal standing in Roman society; this class included prostitutes, actors and gladiators

inimicitia an opposite system to amicitia, where individual disagreements could extend into significant hostility between families

Julian law a law introduced by a member of the Julian family, which included the first five emperors

kyrios (Greek pl. **kyrioi)** the head of an ancient Greek oikos. The kyrios was responsible for the women, children and unmarried female relatives in the oikos

libertas a term for liberty or the political freedom of citizens

love elegy a style of Roman poetry concerned with the trials and tribulations of love; the poetry was sometimes wistful, sometimes erotic and sometimes rather taboo

lyre (pl. **lyres)** a stringed musical instrument played, after Sappho’s time, with a plectrum

lyric poetry with love as its principal theme, which would usually be performed accompanied with a lyre (hence its name). Performances of lyric poetry would take place at symposia and also at religious rituals

manus ‘power’; this is the legal power wielded by a husband over a wife (the word literally means ‘hand’)

metaphor (adj. **metaphorical)** comparison made for literary effect

monody (pl. **monodies,** adj. **monodic)** the solo performance of poetry. Monody is associated with personal, intimate poetry

nobiles a select group of senatorial families distinguished by the inclusion of a consul in their ancestry

novus homo literally, ‘new man’, one who had not only managed to break into the ranks of the senate, but even to become consul, with no history of the consulship (or sometimes even senatorial rank) in his family lineage

oikos (pl. **oikoi)** the ancient Greek household; this would include not only the family and their slaves but also property and possessions

optimates a group of aristocratic senatorial families whose energies were channelled into the preservation of the political and social status quo

Pandemian Eros common desire for the body, rather than for the mind: *pan* means ‘all’ and *demos* means ‘people’

parody a piece of work which is intended to make fun of another work or a genre of work

paterfamilias (pl. **patresfamilias)** the male head of a Roman household; this was the position of the father of the Roman household and, upon his death, his son would become the paterfamilias

patria potestas the legal power of a paterfamilias over the members of his family; all legitimate children were subject to this power until the death of their father

patricians families whose ancestry could be traced to the early days of Rome when they formed a ruling aristocratic group from whom the mythical founder of Rome – Romulus – chose the first hundred senators

patron a man of significant social standing able to offer resources (financial, legal or simply food) to his clientela in return for loyalty

pederasty sexual relationships between an adult male (**erastes**) and a pubescent boy (**eromenos**)

plebeians (plebs) Roman citizens who were not patrician. Originally a ‘lower’ order, the plebeians gained significant wealth and nobility as a result of an ongoing ‘Conflict of the Orders’ from the 5th to the 3rd centuries BC

plectrum (pl. **plectra**) a small flat object used to pluck or strum the strings of a lyre to produce a sound

polysyndeton the use of an unnecessarily large number of conjunctions in a list to emphasise the number of things being listed

pontifex maximus the most influential office in ancient Roman religion; chief priest in the College of Pontiffs whose members were the highest ranking priests in the state

populares (sing. **popularis**) noble senatorial families that aimed to secure power through the support of the people by appealing to them directly with proposals for improving their standards of living

pothos Sappho uses this term to indicate powerful ‘desire’. In Poem 102, the poet is overcome with ‘pothos’

praeteritio saying you will not mention something and in so doing deliberately mentioning it and bringing it to mind

praetor second in authority to the consuls and presiding over the law courts in Rome

pudicitia ‘chastity’ or ‘sexual modesty’; this is the ideal quality of a Roman woman, especially from the upper classes; stories of mythological women often praise this virtue and condemn promiscuity

quaestor the first rung on the ladder of offices; responsible for the state treasury

res publica literally meaning ‘public affairs’; this was the term in Latin that the Romans used to refer to the Republican constitution that had replaced the monarchy

rhetorical question a question to make a point; a question that frames the addressee since it presupposes that no one will answer it

senate a deliberative assembly central to the government of the Roman Republic

senatus consultum ultimum (SCU) abbreviated form of *senatus consultum de re publica defendenda*, a decree of the senate passed in times of crisis allowing the suspension of the normal restrictions placed on consuls to do whatever was necessary to protect the state

Senatus Populusque Romanus (abbrev. **SPQR**) the Roman state: ‘the Senate and the People of Rome’

sine manu ‘without power’; this denotes a marriage where the husband did not gain manus over his wife and she remained under patria potestas

sophistry a philosophical movement which prized oratory and the power of persuasion

stanza (pl. **stanzas**) a short verse of poetry

stele (pl. **stelai**) relief sculpture with an image and/or an inscription

Stoicism this was a philosophical school founded by Zeno in Greece in the 4th century BC; Stoicism maintained that reason and the soul were far more important than the body and it believed that virtus was the ultimate good

stola (pl. **stolae**) the typical dress worn by a Roman woman

symposium (pl. **symposia**) a party with only male guests. There would be a feast and then drinking and often discussions

the *Philippics* a term used to refer to Cicero’s final series of vitriolic speeches attacking Mark Antony from 44 to 43, named after the Athenian Demosthenes’s *Philippic* delivered against Philip II of Macedon in the 4th century. Cicero wrote fourteen *Philippic* speeches in all

thiasos (Greek pl. **thiasoi**) a religious group which would perform at rituals

thumos Sappho uses this word for ‘heart’ or ‘soul’. Thumos is used to indicate powerful desire as well as to illustrate the depth of anguish or pain. In Poem 1, the poet prays to Aphrodite not to overcome her ‘thumos’ with grief

topos (pl. **topoi**) a recurrent feature in literature. Topoi in Sappho include the pain of love, the bounty of nature, invocations of and personal relationships with the gods and the use of the metaphor of nature for sex

tribal assembly a voting body of citizens organised into the traditional thirty-five ‘tribes’ of Rome (determined by family or place of habitation), responsible for electing the lower offices in the senate such as the aediles and quaestors

tribunes of the plebs ten officials elected from the plebeian order to act as a check on the senate and the cursus honorum in Rome

tricolon a series of three clearly defined words, phrases or (more commonly) clauses in a sentence. An *ascending tricolon* is one in which each word, phrase or clause is successively more powerful. For example: ‘I came, I saw, I conquered!’ (*veni, vidi, vici!*) – attributed to Julius Caesar in a report to the senate on his swiftly won victory in 47 at the Battle of Zela

Uranian Eros heavenly desire (from *ouranos*, the Greek for ‘heaven’). Uranian Eros is specifically a male desire for other males

vice in Stoic philosophy, a ‘vice’ was a moral defectiveness; this included indulging in any of the desires or emotions which are attributed to the body, such as gluttony, lust, anger and material desires such as ambition and greed

virtus ‘courage’ or ‘virtue’, a defining concept in the life of a Roman man

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